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NCW
Brown

THE
BEGGAR'S BENISON.

N. C. W.
Browne

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Mr Brown, Colm Rael

THE
BEGGAR'S BENISON:

OR,

A HERO, WITHOUT A NAME; BUT, WITH
AN AIM.

A CLYDESDALE STORY.

ILLUSTRATED BY UPWARDS OF 300 AMATEUR PEN AND INK
SKETCHES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CASSELL, PETTER, & GALPIN,
LONDON AND NEW YORK.

1866.

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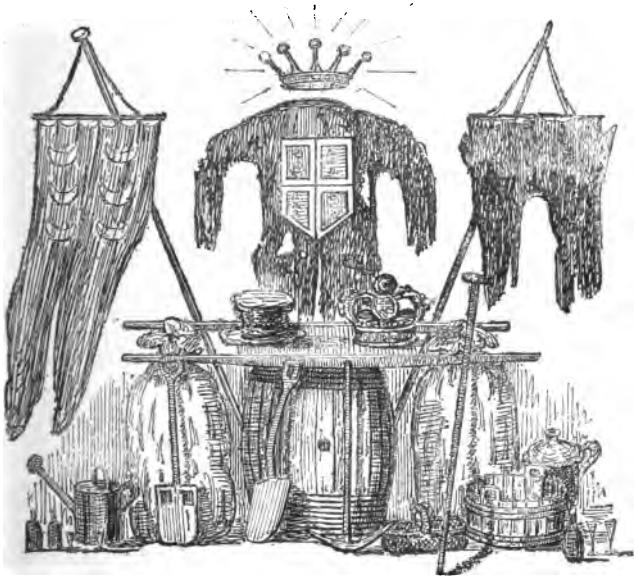
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P R O E M .



THE germ lies buried in the earth,
Neglected and despised ;
But, soon 'twill claim from Nature birth,
And be both praised and prized.

Yes ! many a paltry buried thing,
Which e'en the hogs reject,
Shall from the world a status wring,
And gain fame and respect.

The Goosedubbs Poet.



THE BEGGAR'S BENISON.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

As sporting blades, will poaching go,
'Gainst partridges, and grouse;
So, burglars, with an equal will,
Proceed to rob a house.

With lurid gleams, the waning moon,
Grants kindly aid to either;
Whether the game lies in a hall,
Or nestles mid't the heather!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

SMOKE, squalor, fumes, filth, vice, veniality, noise, nastiness—amongst these I first became sensitive of life. At what period of years and months, of course I cannot tell. Nobody remembers his debut. No one marks his own advent upon society, of whatever description that society may be—high or low, rich or poor, aristocratic or plebeian. He simply *grows* into it. He expresses no surprise regarding it. He neither approves nor disapproves of it. He makes no remonstrance. He utters no protest. He tacitly accepts life unconditionally, uncovenantedly, unceremoniously, and there he is squalling, squeaking, smiling, sobbing, snuffling, either as a prince or a peasant, as the case may be!

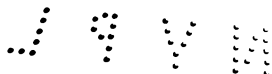
It is only impressions connected with our childish condition that we can call back to remembrance, and these hazily, dimly, and dreamily—without grasp, without positiveness, but still possibly with vast mental conviction.

The first scene of my life, then, of which I can speak, as it were from knowledge, guided, however, by mere impression, opens at a date not far removed from the beginning of the present century, in a dingy, dismal, Glasgow garret, surrounded by the ungracious elements I have spoken of; but with which, knowing no better, I was wonderfully contented; as much so, indeed, as I am sure I would have been with those pertaining to a palace, had the latter been my fate instead. And there I vegetated and grew, monotonously enough, no doubt, but still vigorously and satisfactorily, till what was merely inductive, became a reality in my mind.

I remember myself at last, as having become an active being; as going out of doors and coming in again; as enjoying the privilege of freedom in the streets, and hating the control of domesticity, such as it was, at home, and being occasionally happy, and occasionally miserable.

Let me come, however, to something tangible; or, in other words, to something like an event—the first event, I may say, that made me think of, and feel the realities and responsibilities of life—for all circumstances previous to that appear but as dreams in comparison; and I will introduce it to my reader, as, in my own mind, it was introduced to myself. I see myself then, as it were, sitting in the garret already mentioned, before a glimmering fire, which lies on a black hearth-stone to which pertains no such civilised convenience as that of a grate. It is composed partly of red embers, a few sticks, a portion of dry peat, and a bit or two of coal—the latter possibly the result of my own industry, in the shape of a “picking” from the gutter, or a “prigging” from a coal cart as it passed along the street; for, at a very early age, I had become a pilferer and a thief.

The fire smoulders on. Its lower embers peep brightly from under the superincumbent mass, making the apartment around look dark and gloomy; as the smoke from the igniting sticks and coals rises in swirling volumes, while occasionally puffing into the chamber unwelcomely and annoyingly; for it is blowing a gale of wind at the time



overhead, as may be judged from the rattling of tiles on the roof immediately above, and the occasional crash of chimney pots in the distance.

But I am not alone. As the fire improves, and now and then breaks into a flickering flame, I can see other individuals in the chamber, who, like myself, are interested in a promised warmth from its welcome rays. On one side there is the figure of a woman crouchingly seated on a cutty stool, with her nose poked into the recess of the fire-place, and her shoulders high up and almost on a level with the top of her head. She "*hunts* at a cutty"—that is, smokes a short black pipe—the reek from which occasionally passes up the chimney,



and occasionally mingles with that of the fire as it blasts out in some of the squalls that are whistling around. On the other side of the fire-place sits a man. He rests, in the absence of a better seat, on a faggot, and, like the woman, also sucks at a pipe. Right before the fire, I myself sit like a monkey, while at my side there is a little girl, whom I remember to have been endeared to me under the name of Sissy, which is the diminutive of little sister.

Nor are the others devoid of interest to me also as relatives. I can recal perfectly a sincere affection which I felt for the woman though tinctured with distrust and fear, in conse

quence of many severe beatings I was in the habit of receiving from her in her irritable moments. Yet she was my mother.

The man, I can perfectly well remember as one whom I detested and dreaded altogether, standing in the relationship as he did to me of a stepfather—a connection which even amongst beggars is not desiderated.

I understood him, however, though perhaps rather gratuitously, to be Sissy's father, principally in consequence of his greater partiality and kindness to her, as well as from the circumstance that she had been born after my father's departure.

As to my mother's claim upon him as a husband, it could only have been from an irregular marriage that had taken place betwixt them—she having assumed herself to be a widow, in the absence of my father, who was a seaman, and who had deserted her, or been restrained from being with her for many years in consequence of a lengthened delay at sea, or casualty of some kind. The marriage, however, although irregular, was, for all legal purposes, perfectly valid, if so be her first husband never turned up.

I had a real affection for little Sissy, who was my junior by several years. Her curly hair, her artless smile, her sparkling yet soft eye, notwithstanding her grimy face, her prattling and lisping sentences, and her innocent, kindly embraces, in the absence of such from all other human beings, had created a love and regard in me towards her of the most heartfelt description.

The fire crackled away, and at last became pleasant, although continuing, every now and then to fill, with "hoast provoking smeeek," our little garret; for the gale without swept with unabating fury, and indeed became fiercer and fiercer.

"I think Barney Brogan will be here ere long," at last said the man to my mother, "this is the very sort of night that will suit. Send the bairns to their bed, and let them sleep, so that we may not be disturbed."

"The bairns won't sleep, with cold feet and hungry bellies," replied my mother, as she whiffed out a cloud of smoke from her cutty. "Let me give them some porridge first, now that the fire will boil a pan."

"Porridge!" replied her companion with an oath and a look of contempt, "give them drammock, it will be easier made, and will stay their craving as well—quick! Do as I tell you; for if Barney comes, and they are not asleep, there will be no pleasing of him."

My mother, on receiving this despotic command, which seemingly she thought it would be impolitic to resist, arose, and taking a cracked breakfast cup which stood in a recess, placed in it a portion of oatmeal, over which she poured some cold water, while stirring the mass with a bent pewter teaspoon, until it assumed the consistency of paste. She then called Sissy and myself to her, and after giving us sup and sup about—which we gratefully received, so true is the proverb, "that hunger makes good sauce"—till it was finished,



ordered us to toddle off to our nest, and be asleep as soon as possible.

Our dormitive plenishings were simple in the extreme. They consisted of a little loose straw laid on the floor in a corner of the garret, over which was spread a bit of coarse bagging or sack cloth, and upon this Sissy and I placed ourselves,—a dirty, torn, small blanket, and our own ragged "*duds*" being spread above all,—and thus stowed away for the night, we were expected to sleep.

This one of us certainly so far succeeded in, for in a few

minutes poor Sissy, clasped in my bosom, and thus obtaining some animal heat, yielded to the influence of Somnus, and gently glided into the land of dreams, as if she had lain on a silken couch instead of what would almost have disgusted an aristocratic mastiff who is accustomed to bark and bivouac at the gate of a country squire amongst clean litter.

Sleep, however, refused to come to my aid; for, in addition to a cold raw feeling which was present to me, I still felt the cravings of an unsatisfied appetite, and therefore lay awake, although silent, fearing to arouse the resentment of my stepfather, as I suppose I may call him, by the display of any restlessness or motion that might indicate that I was awake.

Thus with me did the evening so far tediously pass away. Alas! how many poor children are there not in a like situation—the children of the poor, the wicked, the degraded; the victims, in short, of the crime of poverty!

Oh! ye denizens of the west ends of our great cities, who live in palaces; whose nurseries alone, for the accommodation of three or four well tended plants, contain the area that is apportioned to scores of families such as that which I am at present attempting to portray; whose children lie in carved cribs, and beds of down, and on spring mattresses, while protected from the chill of a mere lobby or carpeted passage by silken hangings and pictured screens, think what an extreme there is betwixt the plenitude on the one hand and the penury on the other. And yet this is no fancy sketch. Even at this moment the proof of its truth lies within the narrowest limits. If you have half-an-hour to spare from the drawing-room of an evening, after your luxurious dinner—and your daughters will never miss you while, at the piano they delude away the evening, their music books being turned over by attentive youths—call a cab; proceed at once to such localities as the Briggate or the Goosedubbs of Glasgow;* penetrate some of their closes and dark passages, and opening a door or two, peep in: there you will witness at once the realisation of what I aver. You had better, however, be attended by a policeman!

In the course of an hour or so footsteps were heard ascending the stair that led to our garret, of a somewhat more deliberate and picked description than what had been heard

* NOTE A.—The Goosedubbs of Glasgow. See Appendix.

for some time before, for it may be stated, that so densely crowded were the several apartments belonging to the building, that seldom was there a cessation of traffic on the staircase and relative passages, only that the same being used by parties who knew the locality well, they tripped along the dark viaducts with more confidence than did strangers. In the present instance, my mother and stepfather, who had for some time been silent, and seemingly dozing, pricked up their ears at the sound of a different description of footstep, and as the party announced thereby approached, my mother arose, and cautiously and timidly withdrawing for the purpose a strong wooden bar, which stretched across the door, and effectually prevented any one from entering, excepting with the concurrence of the inmates, opened it and then returned to her seat by the fire.

The figure of a man now entered the room, whom I observed by the light that gleamed from the fire, to be stout and rough. I had, of course, seen him before, and knew him to be the anticipated Barney Brogan, an Irish vagabond, the chum and associate of my stepfather, and so coarse in appearance and rude in speech that the couple might safely have been pronounced a well matched pair.

Barney slipped across the apartment in what was seem-



ingly intended to be a silent manner, but which the heavy tacketed soles of his stout and dirty shoes made rather ques-

tionable. He sat down beside my stepfather, on another faggot, and immediately commenced in what is called a "horse whisper" to chat to his companion, but which, although granting it was a whisper, I distinctly heard every word of.

"And sure," he said, "this is the very night for that expedition, and it's myself that has just come along to see if, before the morrow, you'll carry it out. The ould devil himself rules the blast, I'm thinking, and it will both keep people out of our way as we go to the place, and cover any noise we may make with our operations when there."

"Well, I thought you would come," replied my stepfather, "and I may say that I have been impatiently expecting you. It is time enough, however. How is the moon?"

"Faix, and its flying through the clouds," answered Barney, "at a fierce rate. That is when it is seen; for sometimes it is hidden altogether, and then it rains and hails; and sometimes it shines out like a flash of lightning, but that's seldom."

"When will it set?" inquired the other "that's what I mean."

"Well, I should say," replied Barney, "about two or three in the morning, after lighting us along the road handsomely, and then dowsing it's glim conveniently, as you understand?"

"I do," said the other, while putting the important question, "have you got the tinder box?"

"That I have," answered the intelligent Barney, "and the dark lantern and a bit of candle, all in me pocket to be sure!"

An approving smile lit up the grim countenance of my stepfather as he learned these facts, while he added, by way of corollary to Barney's communication, "Then the sooner we get the 'graith'"—meaning the house-breaking implements—"ready and be off, the better."

"Yes," answered Barney, "you may say that, my honey; for the wind may spend itself out before long, and then we will be baulked as we have been before."

"Sowl of my body!" however, added Barney, as he first looked at my stepfather; who by this time was busily engaged in taking from their hidden places, amongst the chinks in the ceiling and rat holes in the corners of the room, several rusty

iron implements in the shape of picks for locks, pinches for windows, and turnscrews for doors—the usual accompaniments of the burglar—and then at my mother, who still smoked her cutty; “Sowl of my body! but it is bleak work travelling with a hungry belly and a parched throat. Can you stand anything in the way of crathur comforts before we go?”

“The last shilling,” interposed my mother, “has been changed to get meal for the bairns, and only a few coppers remain. Still if you must have something, say what it should be and I will go for it, though we should starve afterwards.”

“Get a pen’orth of cheese and bread,” shouted my step-father, with a coarse oath and a scowl of rage; for he seemingly thought that my mother grudged the outlay for the sake of her children. “Get likewise an onion and the rest in whisky!”

My mother accordingly arose, placed her pipe on the dirty chimney shelf, and wrapping her old ragged mantle, or as it was called, duffle around her, the hood of which covered her head and features, left the room, taking with her a small black bottle to contain the liquor; while during her absence the two ruffians talked earnestly and confidently regarding their approaching expedition, with many an oath and slang expression, which I perfectly understood, but which they little thought I heard.

In a little while my mother returned, and producing the refreshments she had bought, the pair were not long in discussing them, though without even offering the poor woman a portion—crunching as they did the hard crusts and onion with a gusto that made my own hungry state the more painful, and whipping off the raw whisky as though it had been warm milk.

Having finished their repast, they disposed of their house-breaking implements about their persons, clapped, one a blue bonnet, and the other “an ould hat,” on their heads, buttoned their coats, and left the dwelling, not even doing my mother the honour of wishing her a good evening.

This she did not seem to care about, far less to resent, being accustomed, no doubt, to such acts of politeness. She accordingly gathered herself in her duffle, alongside of the fire, resumed her never-failing cutty, and whiffed

away, while I, now fairly tired out, by hearkening to the conversation within, and the gusty blowing without, fell asleep at the side of poor little innocent Sissy.



CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

The moon hath set, the morn hath broke,
The sun mounts overhead;
The artizan sweats at his work,
The burglar snores in bed.

But ere another moon shall set,
Like to a hunted ratton,
Struck down shall that sad burglar be
By the policeman's baton!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

ON awakening in the morning it was broad daylight, and even a ray or two of the sun streamed into the apartment, through the little skylight window that pertained to the roof, the heavy clouds that had fed the gale of the previous night seemingly having been dispersed, while the gale itself had been succeeded by a comparative calm.

I sat up on my lowly couch simultaneously with Sissy, and looked around, when I found that a wonderful change had taken place in the appearance of the room to what it had borne the night previously. On the floor I now saw considerable quantities of rich apparel, trinkets of various kinds, and a gold watch and chain, with some golden seals attached thereto; while, in the corner of the room where my mother generally lay on a rudely made-up bed, similar to that of poor Sissy and myself, though more extensive, there reposed my worthy stepfather and the faithful Barney, alongside of each other, snugly covered by soft and white English blankets that had, no doubt, been brought along

with the rest of the finery alluded to, and which seemed to promote, with their coziness and comfort, sleep to the fullest extent, if the loud snoring which issued from their noses might be allowed to be taken as a proof of the fact.

My mother still retained her old posture at the fire, and still smoked away, though on hearing us move, she turned round, and with a threatening shake of her hand and a cry of "wheest," warned us to be silent, and which she was per-



fectly successful in effecting, in consequence of the proximity of the ruffians, although I confess I could scarcely restrain my feelings of curiosity as to the glittering trinkets that lay near. I therefore quietly laid down again, urging with a gentle impulse, little Sissy to do the same, and thus we remained, yawning and wondering as to what could be the meaning of so much good property being within the locality.

When the proper time arrived, that is somewhere betwixt six and seven o'clock in the morning, Sissy and I were rather roughly desired by our mother to get up, which we at once did, and having dressed ourselves in our old rags, the completion of our toilet being a very easy matter, we were unceremoniously discharged from the dwelling, to amuse ourselves as we best could, after receiving the strictest injunctions to say nothing about what we had seen, on pain of being subjected to the severest punishment, and which we well knew from experience would be of no ordinary description if we made ourselves amenable thereto.

We accordingly descended to the street, by means of the steep and well used circular staircase that led from our garret. Down, down we went, encountering many of the occupants of the erection as they met us going in the contrary direction or went along with us, all being of the same beggarly stamp as ourselves. Old wives, young wives, old men, young men, girls of questionable character, bairns, cats, a dog or two, and even a pig, for it was notorious that several were lodgers in the land, being tenderly reared and afterwards turned into pork at a height of four or five storeys from the ground.*

I remember that stair well—what a traffic was upon it to be sure, for it accommodated the members of some thirty or forty families that all lived and huddled together in the several flats pertaining to the “bigging,” and which in consequence got the name of “the rookery.” How thoroughly its steps were worn by the constant passage of footsteps over them; so much so, indeed, that instead of being called a stair, it might have been denominated an inclined plane, or the helix of a screw. It was likewise a dangerous means of passage, and not a few sprains, broken legs and arms, and even dislocations of the neck, were every now and then the consequence, particularly if the suffering party had been indulging too freely in the “barley bree.”

On reaching the street we mingled at rude play with other children like ourselves, all more or less little blackguards, ready for any petty depredation that they could get an opportunity of committing, such as filching from a shop door or an open window, or picking the pockets of the careless and unwary passer-by. To them such vices were second nature, or rather nature itself, for they knew not how to distinguish betwixt good and evil, unless that the latter brought them sometimes under the fangs of the policeman, and subjected them to a short imprisonment, from which they subsequently issued greater and more hardened rogues than they were before.



These children, like ourselves, and we were all of one type

* NOTE B.—Swine in attics. See Appendix.

and portraiture, may be said to have been born in sin and misery, in poverty and wretchedness, in a state of barbarity more barbarous than even that of African savages; for savages, not being in the propinquity of classes better than themselves, are not hourly and daily reminded of their degraded condition, and therefore are not naturally taught to despise themselves. The aboriginal foreign savage, indeed, is in a position to indulge in self-esteem, whereas the civilized one—if the term may be allowed—is not; and hence the latter vegetates and exists merely as an inferior animal amidst superior ones, to whom his existence, his liberty, and his very life, are matters of no concern. And yet he is of the utmost importance to these upper classes. He is of the stock that supplies to them servants and labourers. He represents the ancient thrall. He is an out-door pensioner of serfdom, in a word; and for the sake of calling himself free, is privileged to provide for himself. He is a Briton, but has not an inch of British ground that he can claim the privilege of treading upon as his own. There is not even surface for him to lie down and die upon. The municipality claim the streets, and he must be no cumberer there. If he would die on them, it must be while



under the process of locomotion. "Move on" is the word. If he seeks the country for the purpose, and lies down in a ditch, or a field, or a plantation, he trespasses, and while life is in him he is amenable to punishment for so doing. If he is found dead on the ground, his carcase is turned off like so much carrion or filth, and humanity in the shape of the parish burys him, in order that his ghastly hideousness may not offend the magnates of the land.

On returning to our garret after as long an absence on the

streets as the cravings of our exhausted stomachs would permit, and having only picked up a few raw potatoes that had rolled from the door of a store to the kennel, and some chipped oranges that a grocer had thrown to the gutter, we found the rest of the household astir and enjoying themselves before a blazing fire with sundry luxuries and comforts, the sight of which made our eyes glisten and our mouths water.

The disposal of some of the stolen property, to be plain, through the medium of the pawn shops, a process which my poor mother was well up to, had enabled this abundance to be provided.

There were spread on the only ricketty table that we had, and which stood doubtfully on its legs, bread, butter, cheese, and especially some roasted red herrings that evolved a most delightful and appetite provoking effluvium. There was likewise a mugful of creamy beer or porter, and a quart bottle of whisky, which Barney and my stepfather paid their



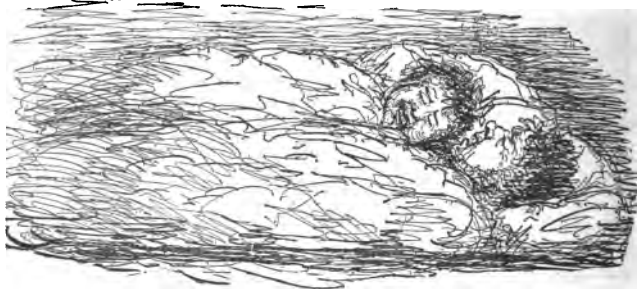
addresses to most assiduously and with a seeming relish. Indeed the effects of the latter were already becoming apparent, for they were quite loquacious and not a little given to hilarity and even generosity.

So much so was this the case, happily for poor Sissy and myself, that after entering the apartment and being saluted and welcomed by Barney with sundry oaths of a courteous nature, under the circumstances, we were immediately invited by him to partake of the good things.

This we were not long of responding to, and well do I remember with what a relish which the finest feasts of the present day, in the proudest palaces of the West End, could not efface, how we devoured the soft bread and the fresh butter, albeit the latter was spread by the filthy tip of Barney's rough thumb, and how we smacked our lips after the red herrings, and the warm, comfortable, kindly cup of tea—cracked and jagged at the edge though the cup was—that we got from our mother, for tea was her principal weakness when she could get it, in preference to fermented drinks, and even to whisky itself.

That day was indeed one of plenty and content, at least to Sissy and me. It was, in the vulgar parlance of ourselves, "a burst after a hunger," and I believe that we actually, for the short period during which the happy event extended, felt the sensation of repletion; at any rate our hunger was stayed, and we were happy.

Barney and my stepfather were likewise happy, if that was to be judged of from the noise and glee which they indulged in; now laughing, now singing, now swigging at the whisky, now at the beer, now pledging eternal friendship



towards each other, now swearing against and execrating their foes, till at last, fairly exhausted with meat and drink, and roaring and vapouring, they tumbled on to their couch, and again fell asleep in a brotherly embrace, during which they snored louder than ever.

The day thus passed happily with us all, for it was indeed one of a thousand, and deserved, like similar instances amongst the ancients, to have been marked with a white

The slightest appetite that we (the children) might feel require to be long suffered, indeed it was immediately ad, while my mother revelled in tea and toast, and whiffing of her favourite cutty pipe.

for Barney and my stepfather, if their repose was at turbed, it was only that they might awake to drink of whisky, or to quench a burning thirst which both uined they felt, and which caused them to send out my r for cheap and brisk beer, known under the denomina-

of "penny wheep."

uff, Barney declared,

drink that a bishop

f might relish, for

reed like a needle

h his nose to his

and mitigated the

y of what he called

ing headache. Bar-

otwithstanding, told

oicest stories, and

d his funniest jokes,

t he kept my step-

in a roar of laughter

7 sat with the bottle before them, the one on an old

nd the other on an inverted empty barrel.

this time the property that had been acquired by means

robbery, had in one way and another been pretty well

ed of, some of it having been hidden in the holes in

ulls, and secret corners of the upper joists of the garret,

not a small portion of it had been pledged by my

r at the several pawnbroker's shops in the locality, for

advances she could get upon them, without any inten-

f course, of their ever being redeemed.

party in consequence considered themselves as being

y affluent circumstances. There was no want they

think of that they could not supply. They were in

—to quote Barney's mode of expressing his satisfaction

uch so, indeed, that they could afford to be generous,

extend their hospitality to some of their neighbours

ere called in to taste the whisky and partake of the

and bread.



Amongst these, there was one that I have cause to remember to this day, for she was notorious in the locality, and an object of terror to all the bairns about. She was an old beggar-woman, named Girzie Galbraith, who passed for a spaewife, if not a witch, she being particularly fond of whisky, and when inspired by it, given to the utterance of imprecations and coarse rhymes, wherein she conveyed either her malisons or her benisons, her predictions or her aspirations, according to the style that distinguished her vocation.

On this occasion she was well supplied with her favourite tippie, and in consequence not only enjoyed herself much, but was the cause of enjoyment to Barney and my stepfather, who laughed loud and long at her coarse stories and uncouth doggerels.

At last, however, having tasted freely, she became familiar, then vituperative, and lastly so offensive that my mother, dreading a row, begged she would retire, a hint that the old lady seemed to be disposed to take, for she at once retreated towards the door, as if for the purpose.

Ere she could lift the latch, however, her exit was arrested by my stepfather, who rudely cried after her, "Come back, you withered harridan, and give us your benison before you go!"



"Gi'e ye my benison!" screeched Girzie, turning round, and extending her withered hand, on receiving this brutal

command, while her rheumy eyes flashed indignantly, "Gi'e ye my benison!—gi'e ye my curse, rather, ye unblushing blackguards: but whilk I scarcely require to do, for the gallows is stamped on your very foreheads, and will be your fate, without the necessity of interference on my part!"

"You infernal hag!" bellowed my stepfather, on hearing this pleasant intimation, which a sort of accepted faith in Girzie's powers amongst the neighbours almost made him believe might be verified; "And is this the way you repay me for the drink you have got?—but take that, at all events, with *my* benison!"

As he said this, he hurled at her the cutty stool my mother had been sitting upon—and which, if it had hit her on a vital part, would possibly have ended her days, as well as her prophesying. Luckily, however, it struck the wall instead, and, rolling backwards to where Sissy and I were, slightly grazed my bare leg, making the blood to flow, while I, fearing that the wound was something deadly, yelled out in concert with Sissy, who was likewise alarmed on my account.

"See what ye have done!" cried Girzie, on observing the accident. "Ye have attempted to kill me, but instead, ye have struck the poor innocent laddie! Oh, for shame, man, to be so cruel to a helpless and defenceless bairn!"

This additional provocation on the part of Girzie did not tend to the pacification of my stepfather's ire, but, on the contrary, increased it; for he now seemingly became desperate, and grasped at every loose article about, no doubt with the intention of further assailing the old woman, but Barney at last interfered.

"Leave the old toothless beldam," he cried, "to bark as she likes; for it's but wind, and won't break any bones. Besides, she's a woman—and an ould one—and, therefore, not worth your while to dirty your hands upon!"

Thus appealed to, my stepfather became more moderate, though still remaining sulky, and retreated to the fireside, where he squatted himself down, and, taking out his cutty pipe, lighted it, and commenced to smoke; while Barney, thus so far successful in his efforts to renew peace, filled up a glass with whisky to the brim, and, approaching Grizie, thus flatteringly addressed her:—"Come, ye ould limb of

Satan, we've had enough of this, so have done with it, and, instead, drink doch-an-dorich, as our Highland neighbours say. As for benisons or prophesies either, keep them to yourself, unless so be you give them to the poor childer, who have done you no harm!"

"Ah! the dear bairns," cried Girzie, after she had drained the glass to the bottom, and smacked her wrinkled lips, seemingly now better pleased than she had been; "to gi'e them my benison, sic as it is, will indeed be a pleasure."

"Come here, my bonnie man," she went on to say, while beckoning me to approach, and which I did with fear and trembling, "let me peer into your winsome face, and peep into your glittering een, to see if there's ony good to come out o' them. As sure as I'm a sinner," she continued, after gazing at me for a minute or so, "as sure as I'm a sinner, but not a witch, there's something in this chap's face that bodes luck and a blessing to boot. As to what their extent will be, however, I canna' weel say: there is great mystery and dimness in the promise, but still it is a promise, and that is much. A blessing gang wi' ye, then, my darling hinny! May your outgangings and your incomings be blessed! May your entire career be blessed! May your fortune be blessed! May you cock your noddle wi' the best in the land! And that is the benison o' Girzie Galbraith, let them gainsay it wha can!"

A hearty cheer on the part of Barney and my mother, and even on that of my stepfather, saluted Girzie as she brought her benison to a close; while my mother, as a reward for the favour, again filled up the glass and presented it to her, at the same time asking her to say a good word for little Sissy, if it was in her power.

"Alack! alack! I can scarcely do that," replied Girzie, after she had peered into Sissy's face in a similar manner to what she had done in mine, "for things look unco' bleak and unpromising here. She is too good, and too kind-hearted—too trusting to others, and too fond to assist others; and, therefore, too uncareful o' her own interest to get through the world without suffering the world's ingratitude and tyranny: at least, sae I read in that bonnie saft e'e o' her ain. This bairn, therefore, I fear, will come through many hardships; but whether wi' luck at last on her side or

not, it is impossible for me to say. She winna want my benison, however, poor thing, and therefore blessed may she be, though a' the thorns o' the world should encompass her about, and even be fired for her destruction. May she come out of these even as Shedrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fiery furnace that had been seven times heated, and may prosperity ultimately attend her and her latest posterity!"

As the old dame said this, she kindly clapped Sissy and me on the head with her withered hand, bestowed a friendly nod upon my mother and Barney, and a look of contempt upon my stepfather, and after drinking off the whisky which my mother had presented to her, and which she had left standing on the table till now, she turned on her heel and left the apartment.

The evening of this eventful day at length came round, and Sissy and I again took possession of our den, where we very soon fell into a sound repose.

How long it lasted, I know not. But this I remember, that out of it we were aroused by a racket and noise that still ring in my ears when I think of it. On opening my eyes, and starting up, the scene which I beheld was most appalling. I saw bright flashing lights, like the staring eyeballs of demons, though the demons themselves remained in the shade, while threatening, warning, cursing, and swearing. I heard likewise sobbing, screaming, shouts of defiance, and wild imprecations enough to have disturbed the whole building from top to bottom. At last, after rubbing my eyes, I began to observe more plainly. On the floor my mother was on her knees with her hands clasped, while in their shirts, and beyond the table, stood Barney and my stepfather, the one brandishing a stave, and the other a knife and the cutty stool, which they had seemingly respectively snatched up in the hurry of the moment, for the door had been broken open, and four or five men were rushing in,



holding batons and hand lanterns, from the bright balls of which streamed vivid rays of light, which played upon the



figures and features of the two housebreakers, without elucidating fully who the intruders were themselves.

That, however, was a mystery soon solved. They were policemen come to arrest my stepfather, Barney, and my mother, on the charge of having committed, twenty-four hours previously, a daring burglary.

At first the two housebreakers evinced a disposition to show fight, but a short parley convinced them that such would be a hopeless matter; the policemen, it turned out, being backed by others, amongst whom were several night watchmen, whose strong oaken staves were perfectly irresistible.

To make a long story short, Barney, my mother, and stepfather, having hurriedly slipped on their clothing, were immediately handcuffed and marched off to jail. The apart-

ment was taken possession of by the officers, who set a double watch upon it; while I and my helpless sister had the option left to us, of shifting for ourselves on the street, or taking up our lodging in the police office.

We preferred the former ordeal, the police office having no charms for us; and accordingly, ill-clad, shivering, and miserable, we prepared to descend the cork-screw staircase. A neighbour, however, seeing our pitiful state, had commiseration upon us—for even such virtues are not absent in the Goosedubbs—and generously offered us shelter for the remainder of the night, though in administering such an act of hospitality, he seriously put himself about; his single apartment being already much more crowded than even ours had been.

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Oh! Goosedubbs hairns, why will ye strive
To crib from interlopers?
For often 'tis your wretched fate
To get more kicks than coppers!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

It used always to be considered, in Glasgow, in the olden time—that is, if the comparatively recent period, with which this narrative is connected, may be allowed to be denominated the olden time—a great and exciting event amongst the people, the visit of the Judges, or, as they were, and probably still are called, the Lords, on the occasion of their holding the Criminal Assizes in that city.

Months before the arrival of this event, its features would be talked of, and speculated upon, and wondered at, and gossiped about, with the greatest interest, not only within the jail by those who were to stand their trials—on the issue of which so much connected with their future fates depended—but without the jail, by those who were to be witnesses on the occasion, or who stood in the position of friends or relatives to the criminals; while thousands who were not even acquaintances of these unfortunates, nor in any way connected with them, nor likely to be affected by their trials, were likewise as much concerned regarding them as if the cases had been their own, so extensive is the sympathy of the human race towards each other; or, rather, so intense is that morbid feeling of the mass which takes a delight in viewing its individual fellow-creatures, while the

latter are suffering the tortures of anxiety, dread, misgiving of spirit, or tribulation of mind.

But perhaps it is not surprising that criminal trials should then have formed such engrossing subjects for wonder and anticipation ; for in those days, seldom—indeed, never—did such take place without an all-absorbing case coming on the tapis, when not only liberty, but life itself depended on the issue. At that period, too, criminal jurisprudence was administered in a very severe and inclement spirit : indeed, it might be almost said, with a vindictive and capricious *animus* on the part of the judge and the public prosecutor, but especially the former ; so that, connected with a trial, say for housebreaking, highway robbery, or forgery, it became a fair subject of speculation, in calculating the chances of the criminal, who was likely to be the presiding justiciary lord on the occasion.

A story to this day is extant, that at one of these assizes a couple of prisoners were to be tried for some crime or other, then capital, and that on issuing from the trap stair which



led from the cells, direct to the bar of the Court, the first that had entered immediately turned round, and cried down to his companion in guilt, who was still ascending, "Oh, Johnny, it's all up with us, for Bile (meaning Boyle, a Lord Justice-Clerk of rather severe character) is himsel' on the bench !"

And sooth to say, in those days, such men as "Bile" had great field for exercising their remorseless predelictions if they were so disposed; for every second or third case that came before their lordships was, according to the statute, a capital one, and a verdict of guilty connected therewith tantamount to death; in short, such crimes as forgery, sheep-stealing, passing of forged notes, utterance of base coin, housebreaking, highway robbery, and so on, which, at the present time would be visited by a sentence of a couple of years' penal servitude, ended in condemnation to death; and it was seldom that they were commuted upon an appeal being made to the Crown; perhaps because the people then were not so prone to petition in favour of criminals as at present; perhaps because the judges were not inclined to lean to the side of humanity and mercy, upon the matter being referred to their opinion, as always was the case if the condemned were "recommended to mercy" by the jury, and so the poor wretches swung for their crimes.

No doubt reprieves were granted occasionally; probably from the culprits having had friends who could work politically upon the Ministry of the day in their favour; for then the mere possession of an electoral vote in a county or a close borough could do wonders; but when they did take place, due effect in administering the merciful grants was studied. It often happened that a reprieve was only produced when the rope was about the neck of the criminal, and when the crowd were looking on, and expecting the wretch to be launched into eternity; such an eleventh hour procedure being intended, however, to awe the spectators still more than if the execution had actually taken place.

It may be guessed, from these little facts, to what an extent the approaching assizes, that were to decide the fate of my stepfather, my mother, and their companion in iniquity, Barney, interested me; for, as to poor Sissy, her infantile mind could scarcely even comprehend their meaning.

It appeared as though they formed a theme for every person's conversation. In the hospitable though crowded den, in which we still found shelter for the night—sleeping now before the fire, now under a bed containing half-a-dozen miserable individuals like ourselves, now on a table, now

below a table, and now forced out of the room altogether, and into a passage, from sheer want of space, and there sitting all night perhaps on an empty box—nothing else was talked of; and openly, before our very faces, we heard the cases of our friends debated, and even decided, in the coolest manner possible. It was almost a mock trial, for we had the evidence of the witnesses stated. We had the speeches of the counsel rehearsed. We had the law laid down. We had the charge of the judge delivered. We had the verdict of the jury declared. We had even the final proceedings discussed; while the gossips around speculated as to the number that would dangle on ropes alongside of each other, like herrings strung up in the sun to dry.*



Three individuals who were to figure in this fearful ordeal, it may be stated, were already made sure of†

It may be fancied to what an extent the moral feelings of such poor outcasts as Sissy and myself became influenced, for the worst results, by such corrupt conversation. Independently even of these, we were at the time existing on the produce of crimes of our own committing; for, in order to contribute our share to the sustenance of the little commonwealth of corruption in which we found a temporary habitation, we were expected to bring in something from the streets, whether we obtained that by stealing or by begging.

To procure supplies by the former method was indeed comparatively easy—much more so at all events than by the latter method; and for this simple reason, that our insignificant appearance allayed suspicion, and our ragged clothing readily allowed us to conceal spoil in its tattered folds when

* To go back a little further, it is appalling to read what used to take place in London, as may be judged by the following excerpt from "Boswell's Life of Johnson:—"On Wednesday, June 23d, 1784, I visited him (Dr. Johnson) in the morning, after having been present at the shocking sight of fifteen men executed before Newgate."

we cribbed, while neither seemed to excite pity, or to attract charity, when we begged.

I am reminded by the revival of these particulars, however, of a very satisfactory—it might even be called an anomalous—circumstance that took place at this very time, from the exercise on my part of my thieving and begging talents, and which I will not apologise for stating, for the simple reason that its effect had a considerable bearing on my subsequent career.

Sissy and I had followed an elderly gentleman for some time one day, who was taking his constitutional stroll after dinner amongst the then shady walks of the Green of Glasgow—for the trees of that verdant and pastoral locality had not as yet begun to fade, nor what, now, presents the blackened skeleton of a forest in the shape of bare stems and rotten branches, lost the characteristics of a succession of groves—with the view of making him a victim to the extent of a pocket handkerchief or a pair of gloves.

The sexagenarian had repelled our begging solicitations in the most decided manner repeatedly, notwithstanding the perseverance with which we trotted after him, the one on his right side and the other on his left, while we dolorously and monotonously kept singing out “spare a bawbee to two poor children who are starving, our mother and father being in jail,” or words to that effect.

During this process, which evidently promised to have no effect, the worthy gentleman no doubt being totally incredulous as to our statement, I had remarked the corner of his silk pocket handkerchief peeping from his pocket, and had resolved accordingly to ease him of it.



Seizing a favourable opportunity as his head was turned towards Sissy, I therefore caught its corner with the tips of my finger and thumb, and slackening my pace,

allowed him to walk from it, his own locomotion exercising the very force that drew it from his pocket.

This dodge had been eminently successful many a time before, but on this occasion it was not so; for, feeling some surprise no doubt at the sudden cessation of my importunities, he turned round and perceived the shining pattern of his "wipe," as it vanished beneath the drapery of my ragged jacket.

His first impulse on making this discovery, after seizing me by the breast of my ragged clothing, was seemingly to give me in charge to a policeman, but luckily for me there was no one in view. His second was evidently to inflict corporal punishment, for which purpose he raised his gold-headed ratan high above his head, while I, dreading the descending effects thereof, held up my hands and screamed for mercy, while Sissy dropped on her knees and joined in the supplication.



My frush habiliments, however, whether he was serious or not, saved me from what I dreaded, for they gave way in his grasp, and I getting thus free, rolled over and over on the green sward, during which process my "duds" flew open, exposing my naked skin, as a lot of raw potatoes, a cabbage leaf or two, and a hard and mumbled crust of bread which I had picked up on the streets previously, and concealed about my person, were scattered around.

The gentleman then walked away, seemingly satisfied with the fright he had given us. I know not, however, what good angel interposed to alter his feelings in our behalf; but certain it is, that a very great change evidently came over them all of a sudden. It may be that with him it was, as often is the case with passionate men, that his anger was immediately followed by a gush of benevolence, or, as I think, having been convinced of our great poverty, by the exposition of our rags and nakedness, as well as the shifts we were put to, in order actually to feed ourselves, by picking

up the very garbage off the streets ; and, contrasting these touching facts with his own comfortable state, that a sentiment of pity had begun to pervade his breast, and dispose him to regret his severity. But this I do know, that shortly afterwards he turned round, and again advancing towards us, he addressed us with the soothing voice of Christian kindness and subduing pity. "Poor boy," he said, "I am sorry that I have so far forgotten myself as to threaten to strike you, and tear your clothing, particularly as I do believe that your necessities have driven you to commit this crime. I therefore have to express my regret for what has happened, and will be glad to learn how I can relieve your distress in even something more than a temporary way."

I can give no idea how such expressions affected me, and likewise poor Sissy, who felt as much amazed as myself at being so strangely addressed—we, who had scarcely ever heard the tones of civility, let alone those of kindness and sympathy ! Our very hearts rose to our throats, while the tears gushed from our eyes. Before, we had cried as if from the fear of pain ; now, we sobbed from the real anguish of remorse. In that sacred half minute of our eventful, though worthless and sinful lives, more had been done to instruct us in correct principles, and divert us towards a better aim, than all the frights and cautions we had before got from policemen and thief-catchers. Oh ! that it had been our fate that a continuation of such benevolences should have attended our dangerous career, instead of being only a little passing incident, like an illuminating spark that for an instant lights up the gloom of night, and then leaves us in denser darkness than before !

When my feelings allowed me to speak, I sincerely narrated to the old gentleman all about our position, and that of those who were connected with us ; and the simple story seemed to affect him very much, for he had heard of the burglary with which the trio were concerned—it being the prime case of the forthcoming assizes—and of the imminent danger in which the accused stood. "What !" he exclaimed, "so young, and yet so innured to vice and degradation. So helpless, too, and yet cast upon your own resources to gain a livelihood. Alas ! alas ! that such a state of things should exist amongst a community calling itself Christian !"

Excellent old gentleman! a thousand thoughts seemed to work upon him, for he was evidently a philanthropist. His seeming inclination was to administer curatively towards us, but we formed only an atom of an immensity, and what could he do?

He gave us a silver shining half-crown, with many an advice to take care of it and not squander it, not because he valued it in the slightest degree, but that he probably had misgivings as to its really doing us good, returning as he knew we must, to the herd we required to associate with, and that therefore it might get us into further complication of sin, instead of administering to our relief.

He then made a memorandum of a few particulars as to our habitation, with the view of afterwards ferreting us out, in a charitable spirit, for to say that he took our "address" would be using words in a farcical sense—the address of the Rookery!—and then parted with us with many a sigh, and perhaps a tear.

Taking Sissy's hand, I hurried towards home, if home it might be called, for the shades of a spring evening were now setting down fast. Often and often I took out the half-crown to look at it, from the little dirty bag which hung from my neck, and located in my bare bosom, for such pockets as I had were so full of holes, that



coin of any kind would have soon dropped through them, and my mother had made this little pouch to hold any "bawbees" that I might pick up. The half-crown, indeed, had made me feel myself to be the richest man in the world, and I thought it could never go done. So delighted was I in the possession of this treasure, that I remember I associated the happy circumstance with the sounding of the City bells, which, on this evening, at that particular moment, had all been set a-ringing.

I have never heard public bells ring since, without being reminded of that half-crown, and of that felicitous moment. And but a moment, though a happy one, it was destined to prove; for on entering our hovel, which was filled to overcrowding with gossips, who were collected to dilate on a great event just taking place, I was immediately denuded of it for the purpose of its being converted into whisky.

That event was nothing less than the entry of the Judges into Glasgow that afternoon, for the purpose of commencing the assizes on the morrow, and the ringing of the bells was the usual compliment paid to these magnates by the Lord Provost and Magistrates, who I learned had gone to meet them on their road from Edinburgh, and to accompany them with all due honours to their hotel.

CHAPTER IV.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

'Twas very well, in ancient days,
For judges to look big,
And dress, to please the populace,
In ermine-robe and wig.

But now, a judge rigg'd so, and marched
Midst din of drum and fife,
Appears, at best, a stiff, and starched,
And most absurd auld wife !

The Goosedubbs Poet.

NEXT morning, as early as eight o'clock, the city bells were all set a-ringing again, in honour of the Lords, who had passed the night at their hotel in Glasgow, after partaking of a late dinner, at which the Lord Provost and Magistrates of the city, along with a number of the principal gentry, and aristocracy, resident in the neighbourhood, had had the honour of being present.

It was said that the party had been a jolly one ; for in those days the Judges, when on circuit, enjoyed themselves to the fullest extent, and, though duly maintaining their dignity, as the wine circulated round the board, got mellow, if not drunk, before going to bed.

Many good stories are told regarding these convivial meetings, and how it was particularly observed that the happiest occasions of the kind were always after a brace or more of felons had been condemned to be hung.

Upon these particulars, however, I will not enter ; it being sufficient to say that, notwithstanding their high office,

their haughty deportment, and their awe-inspiring appearance, the Lords were just like other erring mortals, and on those occasions only deferred to the customs and fashions of the day—a system which, no doubt, will continue to be observed by their successors, as long as the British Constitution lasts, though habits and manners should change and become modified with the times, to an extent sufficient to please even the vegetarians and the teetotalers themselves.

Next morning, as I have said, the bells were all set a-ringing, and continued till the Judges had breakfasted, having for their guests the Crown Counsel, the ordinary Counsel, the Clerks of Court, and, in a word, all the functionaries that constitute a Justiciary Court, including one of the town ministers, who, on such occasions, says grace, and afterwards opens the judicial proceedings with a prayer in Court, while all look as grave and solemn as though not one of them had perpetrated a joke or hiccupped a cheer the night before, or could be enduring a headache at that present moment.

Shortly after nine o'clock, accordingly, there might have been seen a procession of carriages—as well as officials walking—proceeding from the hotel, and along the principal street, and then down the Saltmarket, towards the Court Hall, the streets, as the procession advanced, being crowded with the curious and the vulgar, and the windows of the houses crammed by more respectable, or, at all events, more genteel and exclusive, lookers-on.



First, there came a lot of awkward-looking halberdiers, constituting the "City Guard," or, as the vulgar denominated them, "pikemen," dressed in ill-fitting red uniforms, and carrying the instruments from which they derived their name, the same being something like a cross betwixt a hatchet and a Lochaber axe.

Then, there marched betwixt two town's officers the Lord Provost, dressed in full court costume, with bag-wig, and sword, the latter occasionally getting betwixt his worshipful legs, and almost

tripping him up on his own muddy "crown of the causeway," till he was forced to carry it in his hand. Then paraded the Bailies, with cocked hats, and the Council, with round hats, all looking very grave, and occasionally peeping up at a window here and there—their own honest shoemaking or tailoring shops being on the flat below—where stood, in full blaze and pride of position, while rustling in silks, and satins, and ribbons, their fat wives or their buxom daughters, or both.

Then there came a number of carriages, containing Counsel, all dressed in gowns and wigs, some of these being old and some young, the former chattering to each other, and the latter simpering at, and oggling the young ladies who stood at the windows.

Then followed additional carriages, containing the Macers, the Criers, and the Clerks of Court, big with the importance that pertained to their offices. Next marched half-a-dozen odd-looking men, with opera cocked hats, and seedy uni-



forms, who blew—screechingly—brass horns, and trumpets, which produced a description of music more calculated to shock than to soothe the ears of the community.

The last-mentioned formed the private band, so to speak, of the Judges, and immediately preceded their Lordships, who occupied a carriage drawn by six horses.

These latter important personages were dressed in large flowing powdered wigs, and ermine robes trimmed with

scarlet silk, and wore huge golden "spectacles on nose," looking, by all the world, like a couple of aristocratic elderly ladies out upon an airing, while receiving the cheering, if not the sneering, of the populace, and particularly of the little boys who, where they could manage it, climbed lamp-posts, the better to see them.

Following their Lordships was a large *corps* of policemen, under the command of their captain, who brought up the rear. And thus the important and awe-inspiring procession of the Judges was formed.

Poor Sissy and I saw this grand cavalcade as it passed along, from the corner of a street, and were duly impressed with its appearance, not only as a portion of the populace, but as parties that had a considerable interest in what was about to take place connected with the eventful proceedings of the Court.

To obtain admittance to that Court was for us, of course, totally out of the question; for although, in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution, it was understood to be a perfectly free and open Court, to which all who presented themselves at its doors were admissible, yet so ragged and mean—not to say insignificant—in appearance were we, that we were not even allowed to get near the iron gate, where stood the stern Cerberus and his myrmidons, who seemingly only opened it to those who wore cocked hats, and who were duly honoured in consequence by a touch of his hat, as they passed inwards.

Sissy and I accordingly only hovered around the outskirts of the crowd that beset the gate, and who, like ourselves, were there to learn what was going on within, from any chance person of a communicative appearance, who might come out.

I remember with what earnestness such individuals ran the gauntlet of questioning, as they worked their way through the difficult passage in the crowd that was



grudgingly made for them. "Is Jock Tamson's case still going on, and what are his chances?" one would cry. "Has the Counsel for the Crown closed his case?" would be the query of another. "Is he likely to get off?" a third would ask; or, it might be, "Will he be hanged?"

And thus, from day to day went on the Assizes, the case of my mother, my stepfather, and Barney being delayed to the very last, seemingly as the tit-bit of the trials, in the absence of any of a more absorbing nature, such as that for murder or forgery.

At last it did come on—at least, we were told so—and continued for many hours, during which time the greatest excitement as to it, was prevalent in the neighbourhood of the Briggate and Goosedubbs.

From those of our acquaintance who had been so lucky as to obtain entrance into the Court, and who came to our humble quarters to relate the proceedings of the forenoon, we learned that the three had duly made their appearance at the bar, guarded by policemen on either side, who sat with their glazed hats on—the only individuals that were privileged to wear hats in Court; that Lords Gallowgate and Hangingshaw occupied the bench; that Mr. Snapperton, the Advocate-Depute, appeared for the Crown, and that Messieurs Dourbody, Clincher, and Dreighladdy, appeared respectively for the prisoners at the bar.



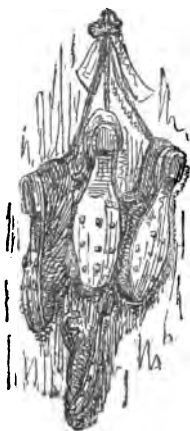
We learned, likewise, that the indictment charged the male prisoners with housebreaking and theft, aggravated by being habit and repute thieves; and the female prisoner with being accessory to the same, inasmuch as that, in concert with the panels aforementioned, she had devised and approved said robbery and theft, and had subsequently pawned and disposed of the stolen property, knowing the same to be stolen, &c., &c. She was not, however, charged with the aggravating circumstance of being "habit and repute."

We further learned that the Judges, on taking their seats

on the bench that morning, and having the prisoners brought before them, had looked decidedly sombre and severe, particularly Lord Gallowgate, who was notoriously "a hanging Judge," and who had accordingly directed very significant questions to the witnesses, the answers to which had been most damaging to the prisoners.



It was still further stated that, even independently of the *animus* of the Judges, the testimony of the witnesses had been conclusive, and to the point; that the stolen property had been identified by the parties to whom it had belonged; that the disposing of it to the pawnbroker had been satisfactorily traced, that the footmark of the robbers on the soft ground around the burglariously-attacked dwelling, and the tacketty shoes of the male prisoners, had been indisputably found to correspond—the said shoes, duly ticketed, being produced for the purpose; and that the whole links tending to certain conviction had been most painfully established. The only chance for the prisoners, it was accordingly supposed, rested upon the genius, the tact, and the eloquence of their Counsel, who, from their legal acumen, might be enabled to pick a flaw in the indictment, or the statutory proceedings of the Crown prosecutors, and thus miraculously get them off. Indeed, it was now supposed that only a miracle could save them; and, as such a circumstance had happened before, it was prayed that it might happen again.



I remember with what intense interest and dread, as things drew towards a conclusion, poor Sissy and I hung about the portals of the Court, to learn the

least intelligence that might be communicated, and which was now all the more appreciable, that few left the Court so as to make such communication.

We learned at last, however, that the prisoners' Counsel were up for the defence; that they had been baulked in several efforts to take exceptions to certain proceedings on the part of the prosecution, the Judges going dead against them, so far as these were concerned; that they had been equally unsuccessful in trying to prove an *alibi*; and that they were now driven to extremities, as it were, and attempting to browbeat the jury, as their only chance, by hinting, either meaningly or unmeaningly, that there was a "heaven above and a hell beneath"—

by daring them to satisfy their consciences with such "paltry evidence" as had been submitted to them, "conflicting, at the very best, they did not hesitate to affirm, as that evidence had been,"—by endeavouring to work upon their feelings as "husbands and parents;" and, lastly, by appealing to their "responsibility" with confusing brilliancy of metaphor and flashes of eloquence,—by,

in short, doing what is usually resorted to in desperate cases.

We then learned that the Crown Counsel had replied to these speeches, and had demolished all the efforts made, and ingenuity displayed, by the prisoners' Counsel, as though their words had never been uttered.

Indeed, it was now asserted that the defences of Counsel had done more harm than good.

The excitement of the crowd around the Court gates became excessive and intense, when it came to be known that the presiding Judge was delivering his winding-up charge to the jury. It was long, but still it came to an end; and then we learned that the jury had retired to consider their verdict.



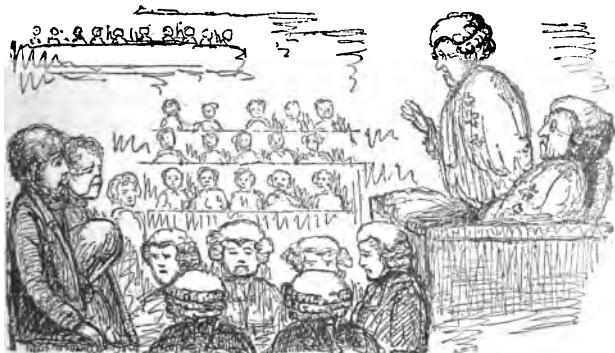
Most people must know what an awful period of suspense that is, which is passed by a full Court when its proceedings have been suspended for such a purpose. I have seen such full many a time since I grew up, and know the effect thereof well. It is the *ennui* of the rack, and is seemingly partaken of by all present equally. The Judges sit fidgetty, though occasionally communicating with each other. The Counsel pretend to be cool and careless of the result, though feeling, no doubt, like mankind in general. The Clerks of Court scribble away with stereotyped patience—possibly a draft of the awful sentence in anticipation. The audience whisper, with 'bated breath, to each other, while gazing at the accused, and wondering what their feelings must be; and, as for the last-named, *they* generally, at such a time, act heroically, and are the coolest of all. If ever firmness was required by poor wretches under such an ordeal, it is at such a moment, or probably a little more so, when the jury are returning to their box, when every feature and expression in their faces are scanned with an eagerness that is indescribable. I have remarked that this particular epoch of a criminal's trial is more distressing than even the utterance of the verdict of the foreman, probably because the physiognomical expression of the jury have already told to the consciences of those most concerned in the result, all that is to be revealed.

Sissy and I were of course spared such an ordeal as what has been attempted to be described; or, rather, we had it inflicted on us under a different modification. We heard that the jury had retired, and, along with that, we heard all the various speculations of the crowd as to what it would result in. As to these, it is not necessary that they should be commented upon.

Last of all, we learned that the jury had returned to Court, and had given in their unanimous verdict, finding that my stepfather and Barney Brogan were "Guilty," as libelled, and, as regarded my mother, that her case had been found "Not Proven."

This momentous announcement was followed by one more so, although duly expected, namely, that my stepfather and Barney had been condemned to be hanged, on that day six weeks, and that no hopes whatever had been held out to

them, by the Judges, of any remission of their sentences by the Crown.



The crowd, now seemingly satisfied, began to disperse, it being dark by this time, although a good many lingered to see the Judges leave the Court and enter their carriages, which they did amidst a flourish of trumpets and horns from the brass band that has been mentioned already.

The carriages of the Judges then passed away at a brisk pace; the gates and doors of the Court were barred; the lights of the portico were put out, and everything became sombre and silent around.

Sissy and I now followed the remnant of the spectators, and were proceeding towards our *quasi* home, with heavy hearts and awe-stricken features. We knew not well what to think of the events that had just happened, and only felt that it was something awful, and pregnant yet with greater horrors to come.

At this moment, the hands of an individual were laid on our shoulders with something like the grasp of a maniac. We mechanically turned round, in a paroxysm of dread, and, restrained alone by something like a feeling of curiosity, with difficulty refrained from shrieking.

The stranger was a woman, enveloped in a ragged cloak, with a hood over her head; but, in the haggard features, which the latter could not conceal in the proximity of a

lamp which shone brightly upon them, we recognised the face, though sadly altered to the worse, what with anxiety and torture of mind, of our poor miserable mother, who, as it were, had just escaped from the fangs of death itself, and had now stumbled by chance upon us, as she retreated from the Court, from the bar of which she had been discharged "*simpliciter*," only a few minutes previously, leaving behind, her less lucky companions in guilt, never to behold them again.



CHAPTER V.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Ah ! whither shalt thou bend thy steps,
Lone outcasts of the night ?
Ah ! who will shield thy weary heads,
Or mitigate thy plight ?

Seek not the mansions of the rich !—
They'll spurn thee from their door ;
But rather trust, for sympathy,
The cottage of the poor.

The Goosedubbs Poet.

As soon as we had recovered from the surprise occasioned by my mother's sudden and unexpected appearance, Sissy and I followed her, according to a desire she had expressed, in rather a short though commanding manner.

The night had now become cold, raw, and damp, from the effects of a drizzling rain ; and, as she led the way towards a retired spot in the Green of Glasgow, which the Court Hall she had just left, faces—a well-known common belonging to the city, which, in those days, formed the only sort of public park the metropolis of the West of Scotland possessed—I confess I felt some uneasiness and misgiving, illuminated although the night was by the lurid rays of neighbouring ironworks.

On arriving at this point, she stopped short, and, turning round, seemed, by her mode of action, to be almost doubtful of our identification, staring as she did searchingly and ominously into our faces.

Being satisfied, however, as to this, she gave vent to what

appeared to me to have been a long pent-up sorrow. "Oh, my bairns—my poor bairns!" she exclaimed, as she clasped us to her thinly-clad and chill bosom, "and do I see and touch you again, after all we have come through? Oh! sorrowful and sad was the day when I was torn from you; and fearful and wretched has been my existence ever since then. I could do nothing for you," she went on to say, "for I had nothing in my power; while the very misery I endured was still further embittered by feeling that you might be starving, and dying, amidst the carelessness and neglect of a hard-hearted world!"

The pronouncement of this speech seemed to give her little relief; for immediately thereafter she threw herself on her knees on the wet ground, whilst she went off into a paroxysm of hysteria, during which she alternately sobbed,



ejaculated, and laughed, like a maniac, and in which Sissy and I joined issue, partly, I suppose, from sympathy, and partly from the misery and uncertainty of our position.

And well, indeed, we might weep and wail, and shriek, and wring our hands; for where could

there have been three more wretched creatures under the circumstances? We were homeless, destitute, penniless—all three alike; for, although my mother, only a quarter of an hour before, had, as it were, been found guiltless of the crime which had been charged against her—the verdict of "not proven" amounting to that—she had received no *solatium* nor consideration for the time she had been confined in jail. She had, in short, been discharged *simpliciter* from the bar, to find her way to the street, in he

same scanty and ragged clothing in which she had been arrested, and which, as may well be supposed, had not been the better of the wearing it had undergone during her incarceration; not only so, but she was discharged with a hungry and exhausted stomach, what betwixt having no food given to her since the morning (and then little), and little inclination, perhaps, to eat it, even if she had had it, in consequence of the extreme anguish of mind she suffered, particularly at the critical closing of the trial.

Sissy and I, too, were in little better circumstances, for we had stood at the door of the Court almost all day, and since the morning had neither broken bread nor drank water. It was not to be wondered at, then, that, placed in such melancholy circumstances, we should all three have given vent to the expression of our misery in the keenest manner.

As we thus passed these bitter moments, we observed a figure hastily approaching us through the gloom,—induced to do so, no doubt, from an idea that our ejaculations were the result of an attack being made upon us, or that of some accident that had happened; but, on coming nearer, and seemingly being satisfied that it was merely a social expression of private grief, the stranger stopped short.

He then cautiously advanced again, and, addressing my mother, said, "Good woman, good woman, what is all this noise about? Has any one been harming you?"

Receiving no answer, he then addressed me in a similar strain; upon which, although I could not make out who it was, from his personal appearance, in consequence of the uncertain luridness of the night, I thought I could recognise the voice of the humane old gentleman who, on a former occasion, and near the same spot, had first irascibly threatened to give me a sound drubbing for picking his pocket of a silk handkerchief, and subsequently bestowed on Sissy and me a half-crown piece, after hearing our little sad story as to how we were circumstanced at that time.

I was quite right in my conjecture. It was indeed that worthy man, who, I have reason to believe, had rather prolonged his usual evening stroll in the Green, and was now returning homewards, when attracted by our wailings. And providential, indeed, it was for us that he had again come on our path, for, on finding that the circumstances of the

present case tallied with our former story, he gave my mother some money—more than sufficient, as it afterwards turned out to be—to procure her and us lodging and food; and, along with that, a few soup tickets, there having been established about that time several soup-kitchens throughout the city, for the relief of the many destitute operatives and labourers who could find no employment, in consequence of the unsatisfactory state of trade at the time.

This seasonable relief acted like a charm upon my poor mother, and indeed upon us all. It seemed to be an assurance that, after all, we were not altogether deserted in the world. At all events, it furnished us with the means of obtaining sustenance and shelter for the present; and was all the sweeter that it was unexpected.

Our screams of misery were now turned to acknowledgments of gratitude. I can remember with what sincerity and earnestness my mother showered blessings upon the stranger. Blessings! and from such corrupt lips, too! Still, they were blessings.



Like the prayer of the publican, they came from the heart; and who knows but that they were not without their effect, even as in that case.

The worthy gentleman now left us, and as he did so, I thought I recognised through the gloom that he was considerably affected. He, however, gave us no clue towards his future identification; possibly because, having done a good action, he wished that it should remain his own secret.

My mother now arose from her knees, upon which she had again thrown herself, while offering her acknowledgments of gratitude to the stranger, and appeared altogether a different person from what she had been before. "Come, my children," she exclaimed, "we will go where we possibly

may yet get a covering to our heads ; though it is long, long indeed since I have been to that quarter: more's the shame—more's the pity—more's the sin !”

“At all events,” she continued, “we will go no more to the Rookery, where nothing but the remembrance of my former iniquity and present degradation remains.”

We now passed at a brisk pace from the Green, my mother having taken Sissy and me by the hands on each side, and, gaining the street, where a few lamps and the light of the shop-windows made our progress a little more cheerful, we sought the outskirts of the town in an easterly direction.

As we passed along, my mother learned from me as to how we had passed our miserable time since the moment of her arrestment ; and gave in return an account of what had occurred with her while in jail, pending the trial that had just ended. These amounted to little more than what we had heard of before, and therefore need not be entered upon here again.



“It has come at last !” she exclaimed bitterly. “It has come at last to what I have long anticipated, and indeed foreseen. The fangs of the law, and justice, have seized on those who richly deserve their fate ; and if I have escaped, it is only because Providence knew that my heart was never with them in their desperate practices, and that I only joined them because my necessities compelled me.”

She seemed, in effect, to say, with the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*, “my poverty, and not my will, consented.”

“Alas !” she continued, “black has been the day that I parted with your poor father, so many years ago, and who

would never have seen me and you in such straits had he been spared from that watery grave in which he doubtless long ago perished!"

My mother now entered more calmly and considerately into conversation with me regarding her future aim and prospects, while cautioning me never to allude to what had already passed, connected with the Rookery. She urged upon me the necessity of never mentioning the name of my stepfather or that of Barney Brogan, or of supposing that Sissy was anything else than my full sister.

In short, she contended that our policy was—particularly where we were going to—to ignore our late outrageous existence, as it were, and to assume, in virtue of a resolution to act otherwise for the future, that we had a right to be received by whomsoever we came in contact with, as persons who, having done society no harm, should not be questioned as to our antecedents.

To follow out this arrangement she proposed that she should adopt her old name as the widow of my father, and drop for ever that of my stepfather, which she had lately borne, and under which she had, in fact, been tried.

I agreed cordially to this, for, independently of knowing no better, and being unable to discriminate betwixt any propriety or impropriety connected with the matter, I really loved little Sissy, and was willing to adopt her as a full sister, if for nothing but to protect and shelter her from any disadvantage that might accrue to her from being otherwise treated.

I wish, too, that connected with poor Sissy, even I could commend my conscience for acting towards her on all occasions as purely and as honestly as I did on this. But of that anon—as the subsequent development of this narrative will perhaps reveal.

We had now reached that straggling description of buildings—some being cottages with small gardens; some without such adjuncts; some being lands of houses of two and three stories, situated in fields, and some nearer the road side—that indicated the suburbs; or, in other words, that the town was at an end, and the country commencing. Indeed, after the smoke and foul air I had been in the habit of breathing amongst the closes and lanes of the Goosedubbs, I began to

feel the superior freshness of the breezes, while inhaling with satisfaction the perfume of the leafy trees, so that although, in common with the others, I was nearly exhausted with fatigue and hunger, I felt lighter and happier than I had done for many weeks before.

My mother now stopped before a two-storied "land" of houses, which loomed in the dark, and from the windows of which gleamed here and there a cheering ray of light.

"I think this must be it," she said, addressing me, "it is now long since I was here before, and then you were but a carried child. God grant that Widow Waters may still reside in it, for it is to see her that we have come this weary gait."

A feeling of uneasy uncertainty seemed to come over her as she said this. And consequently a painful anticipation stole over us that, after all, we might be baulked in our pursuit, and obliged to retrace our steps in disappointment and chagrin.

"Her window," my mother said, arguing for the worst, "is as black as pitch, and bodes that either a new tenant occupies her place, or that there is no tenant at all."

To put this to the test, we proceeded along a little foot-path that led to the back of the building, and finding there, a winding staircase, we ascended it in profound darkness, till at last, by feeling alone on the part of my mother, and no small stumbling on that of all, we reached a door, at which she knocked faintly, and seemingly misgivingly.

She received no answer, and accordingly, after a pause, she knocked again, and louder. But still with the same mortifying result.

She then knocked louder and louder—this time, it may be said, in despair—and we had quite made up our minds that nobody was there, when we heard, with relief, the sound of some one knocking up a fire within the house.

This was followed by another painful pause, which caused us to knock once more; at last with better effect, for we now observed rays of light streaming through the keyhole and chinks of the door, while a voice prudently exclaimed, before admitting us, "Wha's there?"

"Open and see, Effie," answered my mother, who seemingly recognised the voice as that of the individual whom

she sought. "It's your ain sister-in-law, the widow of your poor brother, that's now dead and gone!"

A bolt was now withdrawn, a key was turned, and the door opened, while the figure of a woman well stricken in



years appeared, holding a bit of candle in her hand, the light from which shone on her face, and revealed features of rather a humane and pleasing description.

"Aye, here I am again," said my mother, taking, as they say in Scotland, "the first word of flyting;" for it was evident, from the tone of her voice, that her long absence required some palliation or excuse. "Here I am again, and my two bairns, — your own flesh

and blood, Lucky Waters,—come to throw ourselves on your consideration for shelter and hospitality in our time o' need!"

"My door will never be shut against any one that claims kindred of me, Bridget," answered the widow in return, "so enter and welcome, you and your bairns, though you come to a poor, and a lonely, and an ill-provided dwelling."

"Ah! but we have money, Effie," insinuated my mother, "and winna' be a burden to you. We seek only temporary aid and covering from the elements, among those we can respect and trust; we want sympathy and a kind word, and it is for these we have come a long, a tedious, and a weary distance, that has sorely tried our strength and patience."

As this was uttered we entered, and were received into a cheerful and cleanly room, very different from what I had been accustomed to, and in which a clear fire burned kindly, now that it had been "chapped up," and illuminated a number of bright tin things that hung upon the wall, a clean washed floor, a snug bed, with curtains, in a corner, on which the good old woman confessed she had been dozing when we first rapped, a couple of stout chairs, a table, and a dresser,

all the plenishings, in a word, that constituted a well tended and comfortable, though humble, Scottish "bield."

I was perfectly awed by it, and modestly hung back in consequence, till encouraged by the kindness of my aunt, I squatted myself on a stool at the fireside, with Sissy alongside, and where we now felt ourselves to be as happy as if we had become the inmates of a palace.

CHAPTER VI.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Bless'd be the hospitable hand
That spreads the kindly store
To those who, in their time of need,
Chap at the cottage door.

The Goosedubbs Poet.

"AND where, Bridget," said our worthy and hospitable relative, addressing my mother, after we had arranged ourselves around the fireside of her little dwelling, "have you been for such a length of time, and what have you been doing, and how have you supported yourself since you left this quarter; for with you it must have been, as it has been with us all, not a light matter to do so in such times of scantiness and depression?"

"'Deed, sister," replied my mother, who evidently felt the difficulty of answering the excellent woman's queries, according to truth, without compromising herself—an act of simplicity which, of course, her Scottish shrewdness forbade, "it's too long a tale to tell you in a minute, or even an hour, considering the plight we are in at present, and particularly these poor bairns, who are sadly wearied and hungry, and indeed exhausted."

"If, however," my mother continued, as she took from a safe part of her garment, in which she had carefully placed it, the coin that the elderly gentleman had given to her,

will take this gowden guinea, and obtain some bread a portion of it, so that we may recruit our faded strength and spirits, I will then be more able to satisfy you what you ask."

"Retain the gowden guinea," answered my aunt, while going to her feet, "for a more necessitous time, as I have in my own poor home which perhaps will serve for the present."

She then opened a press, and taking therefrom a small loaf and several "farls" of oatmeal cake, as well as a jar containing what proved to be freshly made butter—she placed them upon the table, along with a few tea-cups and invited us to partake of the same, while my mother



up her hands, and we stared in astonishment at the way that so suddenly and generously had been produced.

I did not require a second hint to do so, but immediately commenced in what might almost have been pronounced a voracious manner, to consume the dainties.

When we had finished our feast, my mother began to entertain her hostess with an account of her career since she parted with her many years previously.

At a great deal connected with this narrative, however, concealed, evaded, and slipped over, I daresay the reader readily believe. There was nothing explicitly said as to the exact locality she had passed her time in. She was not particularly communicative as to how she had procured her

subsistence. There was not a word about my stepfather, nor Barney, and above all, there was not the slightest communication made regarding the crime she had been accused of, and the trial that had just ended.

Nor perhaps will it be wondered at if the poor woman should, like her betters, when placed under like difficulties, have adopted a course of her own to overcome a very pressing emergency, by telling her tale in such a way as not to implicate herself, or place her children in a discreditable position with her relatives. To make a clean breast of it indeed, it is possible she might have feared that ere her narrative could have been brought to a close, we would have been all discharged from the house together, to shift as we best might, midst cold and darkness. If such things as "pious frauds," and "mental reservations," and "prudent concealments," are therefore to be considered venial amongst the moral, the religious, and the affluent, why should they not be available to those who have no pretensions whatever to such virtues, and are neither moral, religious, nor rich? "Evasive answers" are allowed to every one, and it is enough to say that armed with these, and perhaps a little Scottish wit, my mother fenced herself so well and adroitly, that she allayed any distrust or suspicion that otherwise might have been engendered on the part of our relation, notwithstanding that some parts of the conversation, it must be confessed, bore rather awkwardly and severely upon her.

"And you passed through the Green on your way here?" said the worthy Effie, as she came back to minor, or rather general topics, "then you must have come close by the jail, and heard all about the fearful trial that is going on before the Lords?"

"Deed, I was nearer the jail than I wished to be," answered my mother, darting a glance at me as though to put me on my guard, for as for poor Sissy, she was sound asleep at the fireside, "and right glad indeed was I," she continued, "to get away from the crowd that surrounded it, and almost made the street impassable."

"And is the trial over?" again asked the inquiring Effie, "and what is the fate of the accused?—they say they are all equally bad, and deserving of hanging?"

"Alas!" answered my mother, in a tone of perhaps not

assumed humility, "if we all got our deserts, there is no saying what might be our condemnation. There is none of us perfect—no, not one—as the Bible says. Be that as it may, I heard ere I reached the Green, that the woman had been proved innocent, and the men found guilty; may a Higher Power have mercy on their miserable souls!"

"Amen! a sincere amen to that!" ejaculated the humane Effie. "Oh! it is a fearful thing to see human lives sacrificed in such a way. Surely such things as these will be a warning and an example to the sinful and the bad!"

"But I see," she went on to observe, "that these bairns, poor things, are overcome with sleep, so let us put them to bed before it grows later."

A friendly dispute here arose between my aunt and my mother, as to how we were to be disposed of for the night. The accommodation consisted of but one room, and one bed, as already has been explained; and that bed was Effie's own chaff one. But so great was her hospitality, and so self-denying her disposition, that she insisted upon its being occupied by my mother, little Sissy, and myself, while she proposed to shift on a "shake-down" opposite the fire.

Ultimately this arrangement was effected, and after some necessary ablutions, we were all comfortably provided for the night, and which, I believe, was passed, by us particularly, in a luxurious and refreshing slumber that we had long been strangers to.

The early dawn of morning saw us all astir again. The fire "chappit up," a wholesome meal of porridge and milk provided by our kind relation, and even a cup of tea for my mother and herself, a portion of which was extended to the "bairns."

What, however, was better and more important to us than even this, was the agreeable circumstance that Mrs. Effie had raked out from some of her nooks a quantity of good though well-used children's clothing, which she had stowed away with prudential care many years before. They had belonged to her own children, now all scattered though doing well, some having gone abroad as engineers, some to distant quarters of the country as tradesmen, some to serve the state as soldiers, leaving her a lone, though not a neglected widow; for, with many acknowledgments to a Higher Power, she

was enabled to tell with pride how, in their prosperity, they did not forget their old mother.

With these she dressed us out and made us as it were altogether different beings, not only in appearance, but in feelings. It is true that these habiliments hung rather loose, particularly upon me; but with a little tucking in, and buckling up, they at least fitted, and I felt myself quite a dandy in consequence, while Sissy really was so improved, that I felt quite proud of her.

She likewise conferred upon my mother some decent clothing of her own, so as to make her more in keeping with herself, and as became the widow of her brother. This supply of clothing, amongst which a widow's cap was conspicuous,



gave my mother a most respectable appearance, and what perhaps was more important, changed her looks so much that scarcely any of her old associates could have recognised her had they come upon her path.

It is almost impossible for me to detail what this good woman, in addition,

on this and future days, did in the way of befriending us. She obtained for us a room in the same land, so that my mother could be able to say that she resided under her own roof, and in her own field. She lent her a portion of her furniture, and of her plenishings, and bought more so cheaply, and without exhausting the guinea, that it might almost have been said that she set us up in the world again without cost.

She likewise used her interest and influence with some of the better classes in the neighbourhood to whom she was known, and by whom she was respected, to get my mother employment as a washerwoman; and with some of the farmers to procure for me work as an occasional junior farm

labourer; keeping little Sissy, who was not old enough for any work, as a companion to herself, while she "eydently" knitted hose, in a little garden bower at the back of her dwelling, which had been designed, planted, and trained by my father many years previously, with the usual taste of a sailor, in that way, while employing his leisure hours ashore, after a lengthened cruise.

We thus got on pretty comfortably, and independently; and but for the black and secret circumstances in my mother's history, which much controlled and damped her spirits, even to tears of anguish occasionally, we might have been said to have all lived happily.

To show that the latter was not exactly the case, however, I often found my poor mother weeping, and when Sissy had fallen asleep, she would bewail to me the great weight that pressed upon her conscience. She remembered, in short, the many sins she had committed as the associate of thieves and housebreakers; she felt that she had been the degrader of her own position, as the widow of a poor though well-behaved and honest man; and in particular, she could not forget that she had been connected with two miserable men, who in a short time would pay the penalty of their crimes with their lives.

It is more than probable that along with this, she felt it was cowardly and unfeeling that these poor wretches should be in their "condemned cells," as they were called, while being fed on bread and water, and awaiting their fate, without her going to see them, and offering them, such as it might be, her condolence and sympathy.

To have done anything like this, however, would have been a dangerous proceeding. It would have immediately been mentioned in the newspapers, which at that time as now, found it necessary to record any little incident that took



place connected with malefactors awaiting their doom. It would also have exposed her to the gaze of the curious, and would more than likely have proclaimed her true character and position in that quarter, where it was most peculiarly her interest to maintain the strictest secrecy as to her connection with the revolting affair.



I tried to console my mother in her sorrow, as best I could, though, so far as regarded myself, I must confess I had little sympathy or feeling for the two criminals, and in particular for my stepfather, who had been always harsh and cruel to me, as well as to my mother; and when I recollected the many brutal scenes that had been enacted in our former dwelling in the Rookery, especially when he was inebriated—the actual escapes that we had made from being maimed or even murdered, in his paroxysms of mad rage and demoniacal excitement—I almost felt satisfaction that the world, and ourselves, were to be rid of such a villain.

It would have been indeed a fearful result, I thought, if he had been let loose upon us again, though even at a distant period, as a returned convict, as had been the case with some of the inmates of the Rookery, and I accordingly almost longed for the day that would set our minds at rest on the matter.

So much so was this the case, that I had secretly resolved, when the eventful day should come, that I would steal away, and witness for myself, the last act of the law carried into execution, so as to be satisfied that he was really beyond the power of doing us further harm.

CHAPTER VII.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

What tree is that so grim and bare?—
It is the gallows tree;—
It grows right straight, and strong, and square,
Under the prison's lea.

It hath nor bud, nor branch, that tree—
Nor bloom, nor leaf, nor root;
But, heh!—what'e'r the season be—
It hath no want of fruit!

The Goose-dubbs Poet.

THE day at last arrived on which poor Barney and my step-father were to expiate their crimes, by suffering the extreme penalty of the law, at the usual place of execution, situated in front of the Justiciary Court Hall, which overlooks that extended space of public ground called the Green of Glasgow.

Executions at that period generally took place on market days, when the city was crowded with country people, and betwixt the hours of two and three o'clock—the usual dinner hour of the townspeople—it being intended, on the part of the wise judges who fixed the days and hours, that the best opportunity should be afforded thereby to the greatest number of people, both belonging to town and country, to witness what they doubtlessly considered to be such an instructive and warning scene, as that of an execution.

On the forenoon of the day, upon which this social drama—or as it may be more properly denominated, tragedy—was to take place, I accordingly, and without giving my mother any notion of what I was about to do, she supposing that I was going to my ordinary farm-yard occupation, took the road for the Green of Glasgow, and on arriving at

its eastern extremity soon found out that I was to have plenty of company in proceeding along its avenues; for, from all quarters, I observed, streaming forward, lines and even masses of people, all bent towards the spot where the appalling exhibition of two fellow-creatures being put to death was to take place.

Already, though at nearly the distance of a mile, the massive building that contained the Justiciary Court Hall, the Sheriff Offices, and the necessary adjuncts, now known under the collective appellation of the Southern Jail, was visible, it being a bright and clear forenoon; while, on approaching nearer, its architectural features, and particularly its heavy and massive portico, in the vicinity of which, along with Sissy, I had hovered about so patiently during the period of the trial, six weeks previously, became more apparent.

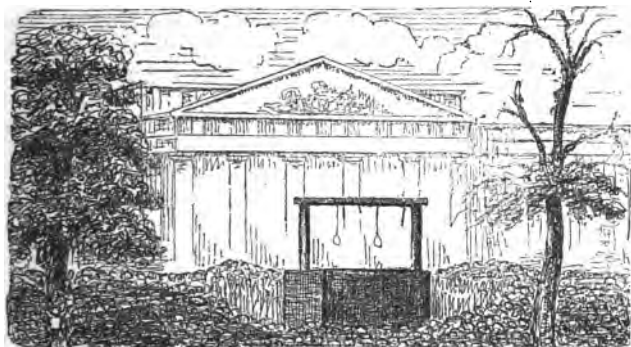
It was not, however, till I had emerged from a patch of trees through which the route lay that I was pursuing, and which brought me within five or six hundred yards of the jail, that I perceived this portico, on this occasion, to its fullest extent of appalling sternness and solidity, and which impressed me with an idea of its severe architecture that will never be eradicated from my mind. It seemed in short to be a most appropriate place for such a tragedy as that which was about to be enacted.

Over the heads of a vast crowd that had assembled in its front, and exactly before the massive pillars that upheld the cornice and roof of the portico, I beheld the gallows, a dusky greyish-coloured, wooden edifice, that had been erected during the dark and silent hours of the preceding night, and which now stood out gloomily in the sunlight, in vile contrast with the more genial features of the season.

It primarily seemed to consist of a rather high wooden basement, on the summit of which, the platform and drop extended, while at each side arose lofty and thick posts or stanchions, which were joined overhead by a strong, heavy, square beam, spanning as much space as allowed, it was said, seven criminals to be executed abreast of each other at a time.

Such an exhibition as the execution of seven, must have been appalling in the extreme, if I may judge from my own feelings on this occasion; for, on coming before the gallows,

the very sight of only two slight ropes, each with a noose



attached to it, dangling in the breeze, stunned me completely, and almost robbed me of my visual perception.

The crowd at this spot by this time was pretty dense, and it was still becoming more so, as hundreds pressed inwards from various points, all eager to get a sight of what was going on, and especially of what was to go on.

The majority of this crowd was composed of men, although there was a considerable number of women amongst them, some having little children in their arms, while around, many boys like myself were running about, some playing at leap-frog, and some picking pockets.

Every spot from which a view of the execution could be got was crowded to excess. The windows of the houses in the distant neighbourhood were filled, and even the branches of several trees were loaded with daring boys who had clambered up to them.

One tree alone, almost right in front of the gallows, remained vacant. It was tall; the stem, before any branches radiated from it, being at least twenty feet from the ground, and it was proportionately thick. It was dead, however, there being no umbrageous growth upon its sprays, and its bark was peeled from its trunk for a considerable way up, thus rendering it slippery.

These peculiarities of the tree had, no doubt, been the cause of its being tenantless; for, independently of its pre-

senting rather a rotten appearance, it was almost impossible for an ordinary boy to have surmounted it. In fact, I saw it resist the attempts of many, and although I was a good climber myself, I was appalled at the undertaking, much as it would have suited my convenience to have got upon it; for the crowd was by this time getting crushingly dense, and I found great difficulty in even obtaining a view of the gallows over the heads of the people, from the lowness of my boyish stature.

Just at this moment, I saw rather an extraordinary exhibition for such an occasion and place. It was that of an elderly sailor man, to judge from his dress, who came rolling along rather jolly, or, as he perhaps would have termed it himself in nautical phrase, "half-seas over."

This son of Neptune, wore a pair of canvas trousers, clean, but stained here and there with spots of tar, while they gripped him tightly over the hips, so that he did not require to wear suspenders, as indeed sailors never do. He wore likewise a checked shirt, fringed with white tape, a blue jacket with mother-of-pearl buttons, a goodly proportion of which pertained to its sleeves, a loose black silk neckerchief secured by a "sea-knot," and topping all a glazed straw hat stuck carelessly and rather agee upon his grey curly head, while at his side, attached to a bit of cord, hung a clasp knife.

Altogether he was a capital specimen of an "old salt,"

but what made his appearance particularly attract the gaze of the people was the circumstance that he carried a bundle wrapped in a rich silk handkerchief, and likewise a monkey and a parrot or cockatoo, which clung to his shoulders, and seemingly were on the best terms with him.

As he came rolling along, tacking, as it were, from side to side, while the crowd good-naturedly made way for him,

he cast his eyes upon the tenantless tree, and evidently thought it would suit his purpose.



"I always like to be aloft," he said, "but here I have neither shrouds nor rattling by which to get up this rather taunt mast."

"Go you up, Jaques, however," he continued, addressing the monkey, "and make way for your master; we have never been beaten before, and won't now!"

As he said this, he took from the inside breast pocket of his jacket a small coil of signal-hawlyard line, and giving one end to the monkey, which appeared to understand him completely, the brute nimbly sprung up the stem, and throwing one end of the line over a branch, passed it down again to his master, who, seizing it, in the course of a moment worked himself up to the branch, carrying his bundle and parrot along with him.

He there seated himself comfortably, and no doubt contentedly, while a number of big boys implored him earnestly to draw them up after him also.

Jack did not, however, show any inclination to accede to their request, but casting his eye downwards, and getting a glimpse of me, whose comparative littleness had perhaps struck his susceptibilities, and inclined him to favour me, he sent the rope downwards again, while exclaiming, "Here!—you youngster, take hold of that 'ere rope's end, and bowse yourself up if you can; I think there's as much as a berth for you, too, seeing that you don't bulk largely."

I did not require further urging, but in a trice worked myself up almost as nimbly as the sailor himself had done; while he declared that but half a voyage would be required to make me take in a topsail-reef as well as an able-bodied seaman, so well had I come aloft.

This was no doubt encouragement, and might have reconciled me to his company, for I now was enabled to see around me everything that was going on to the fullest extent; but unfortunately, our elevated position, and outlandish neighbours the monkey and parrot, had attracted the eye of the crowd, which now alternately shouted, laughed, and directed their wit at us, all which was most trying to me, though to Jack it did not signify a pin-point, for he coolly took out his tobacco-box, and cutting with his knife a lump of negrohead, as he called it, thrust it into his cheek.

All this time, too, the monkey, which had attained to the

end of a high branch, far above our heads, kept chattering and making antics; while the parrot screamed and chattered, much to the amusement of the crowd and of the sailor; for as to myself, I began to feel the awkwardness of my exposed position, and to wish that I had never got there at all.

Just at this moment, however, I was relieved from the gaze of the million, for the town steeples began to chime the fatal hour of two o'clock, and along with that, a movement took place within the portico which directed all eyes thereto, imposing as it did an ominous silence amidst the crowd, broken here and there alone by a harsh whisper that at last became universal, of "there they come!"

The anticipation of the crowd proved to be correct, for just as the last chime of the bell which proclaimed that the dreadful hour had arrived had passed away, four red-coated officials nimbly mounted the stair which led from the portico of the jail, to the platform of the gallows.

After them, and proceeding abreast, came my stepfather and his associate in crime—as he was now to be his companion in death—poor Barney, at whose appearance an immediate cry of "Hats off" arose on all sides, followed by a movement agreeable with this desire, and which now made the surface of the crowd resemble a plain of bare heads.

The criminals were attended by clergymen belonging to their respective persuasions of religion, my step-father having a Presbyterian minister for his adviser, though upon what principle I know not, for so far as I was cognisant, I never knew that he had any religion at all; while Barney had a Roman Catholic priest at his side, who carried in his hand a small crucifix which he pressed occasionally to the culprit's lips, and at the same time whispered into his ear, every word of which, whatever it might have been, Barney seemingly paid eager attention to.

Following them, directly, and proceeding by himself, came an elderly man, dressed in shabby black. This was the executioner, or, as he was better denominated by the populace, the hangman, a well-known character, regarding whom many stories and anecdotes were told, some true, and some, perhaps the majority of them, false. It was said, for instance, that he was a pardoned convict, pardoned on condition that he should do the revolting duty of doomsman; that

he was a murderer, respited only so long as he did such duties; that he was a thief, who was never allowed to leave the precincts of the jail, and so on; but the true history of the man was, that he held rather a remunerative office, to which he had been preferred out of a large list of candidates, and which, if he had vacated next day, could easily have been filled up by the Magistrates with others at a day's notice, there always being plenty who aspired to the dignity and emoluments of the situation.

This official was followed by a like number of red-coated officers to what had preceded the criminals, and on getting upon the platform they surrounded the latter, including their ghostly advisers, seemingly as an honorary guard, till such time as the sufferers should be ready to be turned off. Although the platform, however, was thus pretty well filled, it was not so to such an extent as to prevent the crowd below from seeing everything that was going on.

Within the portico, and amongst the massive pillars thereof, a more exclusive, and as it may have been called, aristocratic audience, had collected to witness the proceedings of the day. These consisted of the Magistrates, dressed in cocked hats, and wearing gold chains and badges—the distinctive insignia of their office—the Town-Clerks, the City Chamberlain, the Master of Police, and a number of privileged individuals who had access to this comparatively comfortable spot, probably through magisterial influence.

Several of these wore black clothes, and weepers, out of sympathy towards the criminals, and all, more or less, were attired in something like mourning dress.

As for the condemned felons themselves, they, poor wretches, wore the best habiliments they possessed, and which likewise had some pretence to the appearance of mourning—my stepfather's garb of woe consisting of a rusty threadbare black coat, which he sometimes used to wear on Sundays, when he went abroad as a gentleman for the day, a faded brown silk vest, and a pair of grey trousers; while that of Barney consisted of a dark green coat, a drab vest, and a pair of corduroy breeches, with blue worsted stockings, having not a few holes in them. Both had, in addition, weepers attached to the cuffs of their coats, anomalous though such adjuncts were, particularly in the case of Barney's green

coat and drab vest, while old shrivelled black gloves, stuck upon their horny hands, completed their array.

As the prisoners stood upon the platform, with their arms pinioned, I could observe their features perfectly, while I remarked that little change, notwithstanding their long confinement, had come over them. They were perfectly calm and collected, and although a little colourless in the cheeks, did not seem appalled by their situation, fearful although it must have been; for I can conceive nothing more terrible than to be placed, as it were, in a pillory, exposed to the gaze of thousands of staring faces, from which arises a murmuring of many voices, like the sound of the sea rippling upon a gravel beach, while feeling that, in a few moments, you will be convulsively struggling before that unfeeling audience in the agonies of a degrading death.

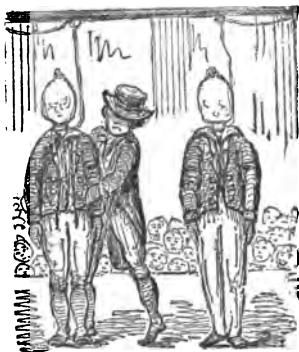
Degrading! Well may it be called so. It is degrading to all parties concerned, and perhaps less so to the criminals than to society, in whose name the ordeal is, alas! demanded.

Be that as it may, my stepfather and Barney having been placed on the platform of the gallows, surrounded by the officials as a sort of screen, the hangman immediately commenced operations. He unloosened a whitey-brown neckerchief that encircled the neck of the former, from the middle of which he took a white cotton night-cap or cowl, and this he drew over the head of the criminal, down to his very chin, thus shutting him out from any further view of the world for ever. He then spread his shirt collar over his shoulders, and, grasping the noose that dangled above, he placed it around his bare neck, with the knot directly under the right ear, giving it at the same time a slight jig, jig, jig, with his rough forefinger and thumb, which must have made the criminal's nerves shrink, judging from what the sight alone did to mine.

He next performed a like office to Barney, and having thus operated upon them seemingly to his satisfaction, he intimated something to the clergymen, which I presume went to announce that all was ready, for these gentlemen respectively offered up a short prayer, each according to his own particular form—the Presbyterian finishing with a brief shake of my stepfather's hand, and the Catholic priest with an application of the crucifix to the lips, and a deep and ener-

getic whisper in the ear, of Barney—after which, both retired from the platform along with the red-coated officials, thus leaving the culprits and the doomsman standing alone on the drop, towards which all eyes were now keenly directed.

The hangman, however, was not quite done with them yet. He moved them a little this way or that way to satisfy his taste. He arranged their pinionings more to his fancy, and subsequently shook hands respectively with them, while a few words passed betwixt them—it being understood that he was thereby asking and receiving their forgiveness for performing his necessary and revolting duty. He lastly placed in my stepfather's right hand the whitey-brown kerchief that he had taken from his neck a few minutes before, to be dropped as a signal, when he had made up his mind to go, and then, stepping back a couple of paces, but retaining his hand on a massive iron bar—the hair-trigger of the drop—the culprits were left entirely alone, exposed to the view of the enormous crowd that had now collected before the gallows, and of which, to quote our own Glasgow poet, Tom Campbell, "the boldest held his breath for a time!"



It was a painful and thrilling, though brief period which was now passing, to all present, and particularly to myself, who knew the culprits so well, and under such particular circumstances. My stepfather held the kerchief in his hand, which he alternately raised and depressed as an accompanying motion to his latest prayer, which he was now delivering. At last he dropped it, while a kind of shudder, or "sough," as the Scottish idiom expresses it, went through the crowd, seemingly as if its very blood was curdling.

A moment, a single moment of silence ensued, and then a crash followed. It was that of the drop, as its rusty machinery mechanically allowed it to give way from below the feet of the devoted criminals!

CHAPTER VIII.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

The felon hangs—while ribald jests
Divert the idle crowd,
Though some may weep, and some may pray,
And some vent curses loud!

Why not? For in this Christian land,
Blessed with a Constitution,
The Gallows,—like the Court, or Church,—
Is quite an institution!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

THE persons of the criminals dropped simultaneously amidst the clanking and crashing noise of the drop, though with a different result to each, for my stepfather was immediately brought up by the rope with a jerk, which arrested further progress, and made him spin round and round, with his head slightly turned to one side; but Barney's person went entirely out of sight.

This happened in consequence of the rope attached to the latter having, from some oversight or carelessness on the part of the executioner, become loose at the hook or cleat, where it should have been firmly attached; and, on receiving the sudden strain upon it, caused by poor Barney's weight, it had consequently slipped so as to allow him gradually to sink, till his feet came on the ground, or perhaps rather the lid of his coffin, which it was understood lay stretched some fifteen feet below, all ready to receive his body when vitality had passed therefrom.

That a painful strain, however, was still maintained upon the neck of the criminal, although he was out of sight, was pretty evident, for the rope "kept taut," as the old sailor beside me expressed it, and vibrated to and fro similarly to the line of a fishing-rod, when a disciple of Isaac Walton has got a pretty heavy salmon hooked to its end, and is about to work it, so as to bring it safely to land.

This state of matters, however, was viewed as no sporting incident by the crowd; for immediately upon its being observed, there arose from the enormous multitude a shout of horror and execration, accompanied with an evident desire on the part of some to interfere, that was really alarming.



The excitement was indeed intense, and became rapidly so threatening, that I expected all impediments would have been broken through, and that the mob would have dealt summarily with those who had charge of the execution, by making an immediate attack. "Ye are no executing the man, ye are murdering him!" one cried. "That's torture, not justice!" exclaimed another. "This is not a land of barbarians where men should be strangled without law!" roared a third; while a fourth added, "tak' the man's life in a Christian way, if ye maun tak' it, and no like a parcel o' savages!"

It was difficult now to distinguish the individual sentiments expressed, all seemingly being actuated by one general feeling as to the disgracefulness of the proceedings; and what it might have resulted in, it is impossible to say, had there not been considerable boldness and decision at once displayed by one individual, who, to this moment, had remained cool and dispassionate—a mere looker-on—not from curiosity, but from the stern necessity of performing the "duty" which had been assigned to him on the occasion.

This was the military officer in command of the detachment of soldiers, which formed a small square in front of the

gallows; the men standing like statues, with their faces to the scaffold, as a barrier to the crowd.

Immediately on hearing the sounds of what he no doubt considered the commencement of a row—for, by this time, such cries as “down with the gallows!” “a rescue, a rescue!” “stone the murderers!” and so on, were heard on every side—he flourished his sword, and calling out loudly, “attention,” and then, “shoulder arms,” a movement was made by the men, accompanied with a clank of arms that thrilled through every one. He followed this up by crying, “left shoulder, wheel,” upon which the faces of the soldiery became turned towards the green, and the sight presented then became uncomfortable to the crowd, particularly when the word of command was given to “carry arms,” and so on.

The crowd now started back several paces, leaving a bare space betwixt the soldiery and the line of the persons composing it, and thus some minutes passed, which gave time to the officer to order a few more evolutions, which indicated, that if further menaces or violence were persevered in, it might end seriously.

In the meantime, those in the portico had not been inactive. I saw several of the red-coated officers run down a stair towards the base of the gallows, and shortly thereafter return again, supporting betwixt them poor Barney, still with his cowl on, and whom they sustained as he dragged his steps along, seemingly more dead than alive.



He was alive though, having been relieved from the noose, as I afterwards learned, while floundering in a half-choked state with his feet on the ground, and unable to help himself, in consequence of his arms being closely pinioned to his sides.

The populace by this time had become more composed, and many began to think that, having suffered so much, and so extra-judicially, he would be forgiven further atonement; but in this expectation they were sadly mistaken.

In the midst of a perfect storm of groans, execrations,

hootings, and hissings, the hangman appeared, and mounting ^{for} the gallows, he drew upon the one end of the rope till the noose at the other again appeared, and having firmly and soundly secured it this time with a double knot, he retired, leaving it dangling.

A couple of minutes elapsed, and he appeared again, carrying a chair, which he placed at the top of the stair, thus improvising, as it were (for he was admitted on all hands to have been an ingenious ruffian, and was said to have invented the very gallows he had charge of, it being considered a great improvement on all former ones), a new description of drop, for the real one could not be used, in consequence of the occupancy of its site by my suspended stepfather.

The executioner was immediately followed by the red-coated officers urging on Barney, who, to give him credit for his bravery, seemed willing enough to go, but that his limbs were paralysed, and refused their work, no doubt, in consequence of the fearful shock his whole system had undergone. What with half pushing him, half carrying him, and possibly half flattering him, however, and it is said they had refreshed him with a glass of brandy, they were successful in getting him to the chair, where they quickly mounted him, while the hangman as quickly placed the noose again around his devoted neck.

Oh! what an awful cry arose from the crowd at this moment! It was one universal exclamation of horror—a convulsive scream of vengeful execration. If ever a protest against the Constitutional institution of hanging, was uttered, it was on that occasion, and at that moment!

Ere it had calmed down, the executioner had seized the chair by the back, and the under part of the legs thereof, and giving it a convulsive jerk and a push, away went Barney again, this time with the result desired by the law, for he now whirled round and round, kicking vehemently in the agonies of judicial torture!

My eyes at this moment swam giddily, my head felt as though it turned round, and I verily believe that I would have dropped from the tree, had the old sailor not supported me. "Hold, hearty!" he cried, "my little man, when you have had as much experience in such matters as I have had,

you will stand them better. Why, I have seen twenty pirates suffer as badly on the coast of Guinea, for murdering a crew and scuttling a ship!"

Jack's nerves, however, although they may have stood such an exhibition well, were now about to be tested to the fullest extent in another way; for, just as he had uttered the above sentiment, the attention of the crowd became riveted upon him and his companions, and the cause of it was this. As Barney had been turned off for the second time, the monkey, which in the meantime had climbed to the very topmost twig of the highest branch overhead, and had sat there viewing the scene that was being enacted below, and—if it *could* think—possibly thinking that if ever a brother monkey committed a crime, the community of monkeys could, at all events, manage to avenge it, at least as reasonably and as decently, as did their near resemblance in the shape of humanity.

I only say that the monkey possibly thought so. But whether or not, it acted as if it had some sarcastic idea on the subject; for, simultaneously with Barney's second "launch," it displayed itself hanging to the extreme end of a twig overhead, by one of its long and tiny arms, by all the world like the criminals themselves.

This parody of the monkey on the customs of its superiors in creation, had its effect. A general and hearty roar of laughter burst from the crowd, in strong contradistinction to the irascibility it had displayed but a moment before. The hilarity on the part of the spectators apparently encouraged the monkey to go on with his tricks. It suddenly let itself drop, by relaxing the grasp of its fore paw, but underneath, dexterously with its hind ones, as it fell, caught another branch, and making a half summersault, again appeared hanging, but with its head downwards.

This further treat led to renewed shouting and laughter, and still more so when the monkey, as if to outvie itself, whirled the end of its tail round the branch, it being of the ring-tailed species, and now hung by it alone.

Although this latter evolution capped its former ones, the monkey was not yet done. He suddenly regained the trunk of the tree, and nimbly slipped downwards, passing us with a chatter of recognition, till he got on the head and shoulders

of a man below, but on which he did not rest an instant; for finding, that in consequence of the close jamming of the crowd, the surface of so many heads presented a kind of paved way, he quickly ran along its surface till he attained the line of soldiery, which he cleared with a bound, and proceeding onwards, reached the gallows, up the sides of which he scrambled, and so on by the posts, till at last we saw him sitting right above the heads of the suffering men, on the cross beam, and grinning with delight.

This change in the performance was the means of attracting the gaze of the populace from us, much to our, or at least my, relief; but within the portico it caused quite a sensation.

A movement there, was evidently being now made to get the monkey displaced. First, the military officer was appealed to, to order it to be shot, but which that gentleman declined, as being in no way consistent with his duty or the dignity of the King's arms; then one of the halberts or pikes was thrust at it, but unfortunately it was too short; and, lastly, the hangman himself began to mount the posts of the gallows, personally to dislodge the animal.

Jacko, however, was a different sort of subject from what even that grim man had been accustomed to deal with; for, as he appeared at the top of the one post, the monkey began to retreat by the other, and running down with a bound towards the portico, sprung right into the face of the Provost, who was standing with all the dignity of office, attired in cocked hat and gold chain, and attended by his brother Magistrates, who stood behind him.

His Lordship was apparently greatly alarmed by this movement of the monkey, and in his excitement, suddenly sprung back, when rather a ludicrous occurrence took place in consequence. He fell, and in his fall overturned his senior Bailie, a round portly little man, who, in his turn, overset another Bailie; not only so, but several of the Councillors being likewise seized with the panic, they too overset one another, and there, accordingly, lay the great bulk of the Municipality on their beam ends, like so many vanquished ninepins on a skittle-ground.

This was not all. The fat Treasurer, who had kept his feet, seizing his stick, a good stout East Indian ratan, by

the thin end, made a fierce blow at the ape, but missing his mark, struck the burly Lord Dean of Guild an ugly salute on the cheek, and his lordship, being a short-tempered man, and taking this as an insult, immediately struck back, with so well-dealt an application to the Treasurer's nasal extremity, that the claret sprung forthwith. The two officials named having thus got up their ire, closed at once, while cracking at each other with their fists like demons, perfectly without control, and at the same time without science. There is no saying what might have been the result, had they not came in contact with the Lord Provost's legs, and tripping thereon, tumbled over and over amongst the rest of the Council—stretched, as the latter were at the time, on the flag-stones.

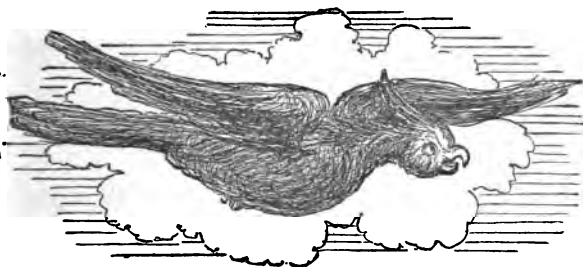


The row within the portico now became general, and might have ended in further bloody noses and blue eyes, had not the red-coated officers of the Council taken the law into their own hands, and from being servants, became for the nonce, masters, with the happy effect of restoring order, as I afterwards learned.

In the midst of it, however, as is often the case with evil doers, the great perpetrator of the mischief itself—the monkey—escaped. Although this one aimed a blow at his grizzly scull, and that one tried a snatch at his long tail, he evaded them all, and ultimately seizing the fluted columns of one of the pillars, he nimbly ran up to its top, and in a trice was seen sitting on the extreme top of the portico, and right above the royal arms.

The crowd showed their appreciation of this last piece of dexterity on the part of the monkey towards their amuse-

ment, by loud huzzas, clapping of hands, and shouts of "bravo!" And so hearty was it, that it seemingly nerved the parrot with an ambitious desire to emulate his crony, and come in for some share of the applause too. Poll, in short, erected its neck, plumed up a bright yellow tuft with which nature had adorned the top of its head, shook its feathers, and ultimately spreading its wings, flew towards the monkey, screaming all the time loudly and not unlike a



human being (for it was a large bird, and of the cockatoo species) "a rescue! a rescue!"—"down with the gallows!"

The sailor, as he observed this last trick on the part of his live stock, began to bethink himself of moving, in case of disagreeable consequences. "I reckon, shipmate," he said, addressing me, "that I've been long enough here, and that I must shift my quarters or lose my property. That long-tailed rascal will now go over the tops of all the 'tauntest' houses, and the parrot after him, before I can lay salt on their tails again; so the sooner I take in the slack of my trousers and mind my weather-eye, the better will it be for all concerned!"

As he said this, he assorted the line that had been the means of elevating us to our present position, and dropping the end thereof, invited me to descend.

This I was not long of obeying, and having reached *terra firma*, I saw the sailor likewise descend, and who now coiling up the line, and stowing it away in his bosom, seized his bundle, while tipping me a nautical nod, with "good-bye, messmate," turned away, and mingled with the crowd.

The monkey and cockatoo by this time had retreated from

their perch, and had become lost to sight, probably having, as Jack said, gone over all the tauntest house-tops by this time.

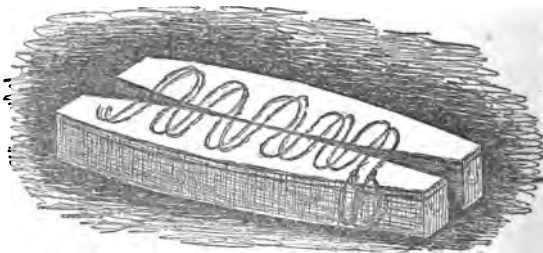
The excitement of the crowd was likewise over. Indeed, the greater part thereof had dispersed, while preparations for removing the bodies of the now dead criminals were hastily being made.

I however still lingered near the spot, and at last saw all that was earthly of my late stepfather and Barney lowered from the gallows, to be deposited in rough deal coffins, which were not even painted. The gallows itself was likewise taken possession of by workmen, and also removed.

The military officer now put his men through a manœuvre or two proper for the occasion; the drums and fifes struck up, and away they marched to their quarters, to the tune of "I ha'e laid a herring in salt."

Half an hour had scarcely passed, to conclude, when you would not have known that such a scene as I have attempted to describe had occurred.

All were gone!—the crowd—the Magistrates—the soldiery—the gallows—the criminals!*



* NOTE C.—Capital executions. See Appendix.

CHAPTER IX.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

The sailor may the ocean roam,
In varying scenes to mingle;
But there's no harbour like his home,
Nor haven like his ingle!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

I now commenced my retreat homewards, taking the route, or nearly so, that had been pursued by my mother, Sissy, and myself, on the evening of the day of the trial—the sad consummation of which, I congratulated myself, I had at last just been the solitary witness of, so far as our own little family party was concerned.



On reaching the streets, I was startled by hearing “the last speech and dying confessions” of the men that had lately been executed, bawled out by the ballad hawkers—surrounded by a gaping throng—who for this day had dropped their usual avocation of singing, or rather chanting

doggerels, and were even making a better trade by selling what they pretended to be “a full, true, and particular account of the great and exciting spectacle,” &c., &c., that had just taken place.

According to this "full, true, and particular" account, the criminals had been attended to the foot of the gallows by their wives and children, and had taken an agonizing and affectionate farewell "with all they held dear on earth," before mounting the awful drop. They had then made long and eloquent speeches to the crowd, confessing their guilt, and attributing their misfortunes to a neglect of religious duties while young, and in particular to the circumstance, that they had never gone to church, and had been habitually Sabbath-breakers. "They had, however," the account went on to say, "now become very different men from what they had formerly been; they were, on the contrary, reclaimed and converted, and so happy in their minds, and so sure of going to a blessed immortality, that they had rather preferred to die than to live."

This halfpenny's worth of false information ended by stating, that after the criminals had sung a psalm on the drop, in which all around, including the Magistrates, Council, strangers, crowd, and even hangman had joined, they had "dropped the fatal signal, and been launched into eternity!"

I could not help being struck by this audacious perversion of facts; but still, young although I was, I had wit enough to perceive that the document, such as it was, might be turned to use, both for my own sake, and that of my mother and Sissy, in case of anything coming to my aunt's ears regarding our connection with the culprits; for, armed with it, we could point to the printed fact that the sufferers had been attended at the gallows by their wives and families, and if that was the case, how could we form that domestic party, when two-thirds of our number were, to her own knowledge, miles away from the scene, and in fact present with herself all the time. I therefore, with the only copper that I had in the world, purchased a copy of the coarsely printed whitey-brown report, while thinking, as I still do, that it was not badly invested money, and that the transaction was worthy of the "great commercial mind" of a Glasgow chap!

As I approached home, I began to have some misgivings as to how I would be received after having so surreptitiously stolen away to witness the revolting scene of the execution, though dreading more the anticipated gentle remonstrance I knew my worthy aunt would urge against my conduct,

than any severe physical punishment that my mother might inflict—so true is it that kindly suasion and mild admonition with youth, are much more effective than the harsher course which is too often practised. My mother, however, I found was not in a mood to be severe. She was, on the contrary, perfectly prostrated; so that when I entered the dwelling I found her lying in bed and enveloped in grief and tears. To my remarks she only answered with convulsive sobs, and altogether appeared to be thoroughly distressed and subdued. As for poor Sissy, she was out at play with the other little urchins of the village, while amusing herself as unconsciously and happily as though she had never had anything to do with our late *quasi*, relative. Indeed, I have reason to believe in consequence of the length of time that had passed, and from a discreet silence on the part of my mother and me regarding late events, as well as the entire new mode of life she had entered into, that Goosedubbs reminiscences had to a great extent passed away from her simple and innocent mind.

After communicating a few hasty particulars to my mother respecting what I had witnessed, to which she made no reply, excepting in such shape as showed the painful mental suffering she was undergoing, and refreshing my hungry stomach with some crusts and a cupful of butter-milk, with a hearty relish that a prince might have coveted, I proceeded to the dwelling of my aunt with the view of confiding to her what had been my occupation that morning, and so getting over my next and principal difficulty.

I had scarcely, however, made the preliminary announcement of the fact, and presented the printed document, while screwing my courage up against the serious and somewhat severe expression of countenance which she had assumed, when I was interrupted, I confess to my relief, by hearing a loud huzzaing and merry-making amongst the youthful population of the locality that generally disported themselves on the high-way passing in front of our dwelling.

Suspending my narrative, I rushed to the window of the apartment, and there beheld what astonished me not a little.

It was my old friend, the sailor, who had been my companion on the branch of the tree before the jail that morning, and who had found his erratic way this length, again bearing on his shoulders the monkey and parrot, and carrying in his

hand his bundle, while surrounded by the youthful fry of the village, and some of the elderly villagers themselves, who seemed vastly pleased with the antics of the brute, and the screams and talking of the bird.

I was still further amazed, however, when, instead of passing onwards, as I at first supposed would have been the case, the sailor directed his steps towards the entry which led to our lodging, and, after clambering up the stair, knocked loudly at the door of my aunt's dwelling, which he followed up, after lifting the latch, by boldly walking into.

My aunt seemed as much surprised at this intrusion as I was, only on my part, I felt that, in consequence of the meeting on the tree, he was not quite a stranger to me, while she evidently considered him totally so, if I might judge from the way she stared at him without speaking.

"What!" he at last exclaimed, "am I then so altered, that even my own sister does not know me? Oh! Effie, have you forgotten your poor brother Jack, who has been boxing about the globe, for such a length of time, and who never expected to anchor here again?"

"Brother!—Jack!" cried my aunt in return, while something seemed to dawn on her memory, but not to such an extent as to make her realize the truth of what the sailor's remarks had suggested, "I had once a brother, but he has been long, long, dead; we have not heard a word regarding him for many years!"

"Dead!" answered the sailor, "well, then, if he has been dead, he has come alive again; for, as sure as you are there, Effie, I am Jack, although, to tell you the truth, I have been so hardly used by the winds and the waves, as well as the pressgang, that I am not surprised my private signals should be forgotten, and I be taken for another craft!"

And, indeed, it was Jack, my aunt's brother, my mother's



husband, my own father! Little did I suspect, while sitting alongside of him that forenoon, the near relationship that existed betwixt us. Little, on the other hand, did he suspect the position which the suffering men had held—particularly one of them—in respect to those whom he now came once more to join, as though he had again risen from the grave!

It is said that there are no romances so wonderful as those which occur in real life, and this was a proof of the truth of the adage.

I will not dwell upon the scene that here took place on the occasion of a brother and sister, now both elderly people, coming fully to recognise each others true position and existence again, after such a lengthened separation. Neither will I enter into the respective sensations of a father and a son, becoming known to each other at such an unexpected moment. Far less will I attempt to describe the further meeting of that father with a mother that considered herself a widow, and who had, long ago, given up hopes of ever again seeing him in this world.

Their feelings, of course, were varied. My mother had much upon her mind for what she had done, both disgracefully connected with herself, and with what was due to a husband, whose worst fault was that he had necessarily separated himself from her to pursue an avocation which rendered such a proceeding absolute, and who had subsequently seemingly abandoned her from causes which he could neither control nor evade.

What my mother had done, however, was her own secret, shared in by one only, who was under promise to maintain it a secret, as well for his own sake as hers, and who, young though he was, had a sufficient supply of reasoning power and prudence to know that the divulgment of it could only lead to misery and ruin towards all concerned, himself among the rest.

My father was consequently kept in the dark regarding matters which, if known to him, bold and brave old sailor though he was, and accustomed to brag that nothing could daunt him or take him aback, would have completely unnerved him, and filled him with horror.

Alas! that such things should be? They happen, however,

sometimes in the highest circles; why should they not in the lowest?

The jolly old sailor, after saluting his "old woman," as he denominated my mother, and embracing me in his own rough sailor fashion, and after fondling poor little Sissy, whom he took to his bosom with all the fondness and attach-



ment of a father, began to realize to himself the comforts of a home, humble though it was. His sentiments on this point he of course had his own way of expressing, and over and over again he repeated his assurance regarding the satisfaction he felt in casting anchor under the lee of his own cheerful "ingle" once more.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "only those who have faced the ocean, and been buffeted by its billows and its breezes, can know what it is to have a quiet deck over one's head. It's all very

well to have a smart craft under one's feet—and variety of places and scenery has its pleasures—but a fore-castle is but a dungeon after all; and to be obliged to plunge into it under all circumstances, in cold and heat, in calm and storm, soon turns your soul and your stomach against it."

The old fellow then went on to tell his adventures since he had left us, though of his departure I had but a dreamy recollection, having been then a mere child, and Sissy not yet born.

He had sailed, he said, on a voyage which he had no reason to expect would have lasted beyond a couple of years, but for the ship having been cast away on a reef of rocks situated off an island in the Southern Archipelago. There he left the bones, he said, of the old craft, and only reached the island itself with the greatest difficulty in the single boat that was spared, namely, the little jolly boat, the others being swamped by the heavy sea that was running at the time, sending to eternity the greater portion of the crew, who had deserted the captain on the accident happening, in the other and best boat, although warned by him that it would be safer to stick by the ship till the tide should rise,

so as to make the water less broken over the rough rocks that stuck up around them, and which churned the fluid into froth and foam.

This advice of the captain, however, he went on to say, "these lubbers" had despised, thinking it was given merely for his own purposes, and in order to induce them to stay by him to save the ship, if possible, at the expense of their own chances of escaping.

The consequences were to them most disastrous; not a soul of the cowardly and selfish pack escaped, while those who stuck by the master "as sailors—if they be sailors—always should do," reaped the benefit of their disinterestedness. They all reached the island in their frail skiff in safety, where they remained several weeks suffering great vicissitudes and hardships; for, the island being devoid of vegetation, they had no shelter by day or night, and were accordingly scorched by the burning sun during the one, and chilled by the heavy dews during the other. It was likewise destitute of water, and their sufferings from thirst were in consequence fearful.

"Ah!" the old tar would cry, as he sat by the fireside that happy evening, for although it was by no means cold weather, he still loved its vicinity, it seemingly having a tendency to relax, as he expressed it, the "tackles of his jaws," and incline him to be garrulous. "Ah! few know what the pangs of thirst are in these latitudes, where the sun beams down perpendicularly upon you, and boils the very blood in your veins."

"Hunger, no doubt," he continued, "is likewise a fearful and severe thing; but the intensity of your drought, makes even it a secondary suffering."

He seemed, in short, to verify the agony of thirst that is expressed in the exclamation of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*—

"Water, water, everywhere,
And not a drop to drink!"

In course of time, however, he went on to tell us, the ship broke up, and that setting her cargo adrift, some of which reached the shores of the island, their wants, to some extent, were thereby relieved.

First, a quarter cask of wine reached the beach, but which they scarcely dared to put to their lips, as it tasted, in their

then state, like molten lead. Then a hogshead of porter came, which suited better, though still to their palates fiery and unsatisfactory. Then bumped ashore a barrel of salt pork, but that was as bad in another way. Everything, in a word, was short of what they craved, namely, the simplest and the best, the real *elixir vite*, the wine of nature—pure water.

At last a harbinger of promise reached them. It was a tin case containing superior biscuit, which being hermetically sealed, floated safely to shore without being damaged. This was succeeded by a half puncheon of water, which they pulled on shore with cheers, and which they economised as the greatest luxury that could have been granted to them by a merciful Providence.

It was indeed what saved them; having been the means of protracting their lives till a ship passed near, which they boarded with the jolly boat, and thus got away from the desert island.

The ship, nevertheless, was bound for a distant port situated in the very antipodes of this country, but here they found vessels homeward bound, in one of which he engaged as a hand, and expected to have reached home in her after an absence not exceeding two years and a-half from his time of leaving, but, unluckily, on reaching the Chops of the Channel, he was impressed by a King's ship and taken out of her—this country being at war with another state at the time, and which circumstance justified, or at all events legalised—the cruel and harsh measure.

He was now put on board of a man-of-war as an able-bodied seaman, but though shipped against his will and inclination, he was expected to serve the King with as much fidelity and loyalty as though he had volunteered to do so.

And so he was heartily disposed to do, he said, but for one drawback. The captain of the ship was a severe and haughty martinet, who was ever grumbling at his officers and tyrannising over his men, whom he seemed more inclined to look upon as slaves than fellow-subjects. He was ever punishing them one way or other, now overworking them capriciously and needlessly; now stopping their grog; and now ordering them to be lashed, mast-headed, or ropes-ended, as it suited his revenge or his whims.

This state of things he determined not to submit to, seeing that the miserable position in which he was placed was none of his own choosing. He accordingly took the first opportunity that presented itself, on the occasion of the ship putting into a neutral port, of deserting, by seizing the lucky chance of getting ashore one dark night in a little boat, rowed by an old man who sold milk to ships in port; and after skulking about till the man-of-war had put to sea, was forced, in order to save himself from starving, to accept an engagement in an American vessel, in which he sailed to the Pacific ocean, where the ship was detained for upwards of two years trading from one port to another, principally engaged in the hide trade.



At last the American ship returned to her own country, when he again shipped in British employment, and visited a great variety of places throughout the globe; one peculiar circumstance and another always happening to prevent his getting an opportunity to return home.

This in course of time, however, presented itself, and to make a long yarn short, as he said, he did get home, with a good round comfortable sum of money in his possession, a well-packed kit, and the parrot or cockatoo, and the monkey to the bargain; the former, which spoke well, although it had a bad habit of swearing, which it had acquired amongst the sailors, being intended as a companion to his worthy widowed sister; and the latter, which had learned a number of tricks on board ship, such as dancing, playing at quarter-staff, smoking a pipe, and so on, as a pet for me, and which in reality he soon became with all the youngsters of the locality, in consequence of his queer resemblance to humanity, I having subsequently dressed him in some of my old clothing, which I got made down as a jacket and trowsers for him.

"And what a singular circumstance it was," my father remarked, "that the first meeting of myself, the cockatoo, and the monkey, with my own son, should have been on a

tree, at the execution of two rascals, which I witnessed by the merest chance, in consequence of laying my course for home through the Green, in front of which they met their fate. Little did we suppose, when perched up there, that we were so closely related as father and son!"

Less, however, did the honest tar suppose, at the same time, that another description of relationship existed betwixt the sufferers on the drop, and the spectators on the tree, almost too horrible for contemplation, and certainly too dangerous for revelation!

CHAPTER X.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

All despots play the tyrant's part—
'Tis one of Nature's laws—
Thus, pedagogues make children smart
By dint of birch or tawse.

But tyranny, like other things,
Is often urged too far—
Then, pedagogues, like common kings,
Must face rebellious war!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

THE old sailor, having now safely cast anchor in our humble dwelling, or as he himself expressed it, "having moored himself stem and stern in the haven of home," began to think of making arrangements for the proper economy of his household and the welfare of his family—both of which he was well entitled to do, in consequence of the wealth he had brought with him, and which, although by people in a great way, might have been thought little, was by us, in our small way, thought much.

"It will serve," he said, "to keep me six months at least ashore, and when I do require again to go to sea, will enable me to leave you something to keep the vultures from your bones while I am away, and which, I promise, won't be for such a length of time as before, if I can help it."

He accordingly laid out a small sum in extra furniture, which made our little bield quiet a miniature palace in our estimation, and after rewarding his sister for what she had humanly given to us previously to his arrival, appropriated the balance as a subsidy to my mother's honest endeavours to

labour, in addition to any little thing he might do himself towards the support of his family.

He likewise resolved that I should have some education, for as he said, "a man without learning is like a ship without a compass, and is liable in consequence to get into all sorts of difficulties and dangers, without the means of knowing how to steer out of them again!"

"Aye, aye," he would continue, "it's myself that knows what the want of learning is, for although I have served as man and boy nearly forty years on board ship, and can hand-reef and steer as well as any fellow afloat, yet in consequence of not having been able to pick up a little education, I am but a poor Jack before the mast after all, and subject to be commanded by any lubber that can calculate a little, and cock his eye at the sun through a sextant, and tell the latitude with the aid of a chronometer and a nautical almanac, although in a gale of wind he perhaps could neither go aloft, nor take a spell at the wheel, or say what should be done, so well as I can!"

He accordingly fixed that, in the meantime, I should cease to take regular work at any of the farms, as before, in the neighbourhood, and instead thereof, that I should attend a school close by, where one Dominie Lickladdie undertook to teach reading, writing, English grammar, Latin, mathematics, arithmetic, geography, and the use of the globes, with a long list of minor instructions to boot, as the pupils went along in their course of enlightenment.

This learned pedagogue was celebrated for his accomplishments in the instruction of youth, and particularly for the manner with which he enforced his system, that being principally done by a free use of the tawse—a celebrated Scottish implement at that time, freely used in schools north of the Tweed—and which was understood to be the means of persuading idle pupils to be attentive and diligent at their lessons, when all others had failed.

This little instrument, the use of which is now almost abolished, even in Scotland, where at one time it was universal, and is supposed to have been the cause of Scotsmen being so celebrated throughout the world for their learning and attainments, although Burns gives a different reason why they should be "loved at home, revered abroad," may possibly

have been introduced by the Romans, its name being of Latin derivation.

I had heard of its merits from other boys, who attended Dominie Lickladdie's school, before I saw it, and, according to their report, these were strikingly peculiar. It was, to quote their graphic description, "awfu' nippy" when applied to the open hand in the shape of "palmies," "unco nippy" when dorsally exercised betwixt the shoulders, and "infernally nippy" when fundamentally bestowed.

In all these various manipulations, the dominie was known as being expert, and in order to obtain the fullest results from the use of said tawse, it was understood he had burnt the tips of its leather thongs, so that it not only cracked like a whip, but "took out the bits," on occasions when the dominie was in a rage.

I shall never forget the palpitations of my heart and the misgivings of my mind, when I accompanied my father on the eventful morning upon which I was to be introduced to the seminary of Dominie Lickladdie, by the worthy tar. The establishment was situated at one end of a thatched house—the other portion being devoted to the dwelling of the dominie and his family—and consisted of a single room, very low in the roof, to give ventilation to which, the weather being warm at the time, the upper sashes of the window had been lowered completely. The consequence of this lowering was that, long before we arrived at the portal, we heard the murmuring of the "bairns" as they conned over their lessons, occasionally varied by the voice of the pedagogue as he bawled out an order or a word, or by his violence, as he brought down the tawse with a *thud*, either on the desk before him, as a warning to all around, or on the person of some unlucky urchin, as an individual punishment.

The buzzing sound was not unlike that which proceeds from a hive of bees on a warm summer day, and as if to complete the resemblance, occasionally a boy would issue from the door of the establishment and another would vanish within it, even as bees do when in the full operation of honey making.



Into the midst of this apiary my father, lifting the door-latch and followed closely by me, boldly entered, when in a moment all became silent, every eye in the apartment at the same time being directed upon the strangers.

The room contained from fifty to sixty children of both sexes, the girls being placed on one side, and the boys on the other, for the purpose of conning their lessons, although they came together when they stood up to be exercised in the order of classes.

All, with the exception of one class, which was standing opposite the dominie at the time, occupied seats having desks before them, on which lay the books they were studying, or rather supposed to be studying; for, in truth, the greater portion of this fry, though keeping up a sing-song murmuring and a movement of their lips, were generally engaged with their hands and attentions otherwise—some in counting their marbles; some in nicking with their knives the desk they leant on, or the form they sat on; some contemplating their peeries and tops; some in pencilling the boards of their books with vain attempts at likenesses of their instructor, but which only formed laughable caricatures; and some in annoying their neighbours, by pinching them, or rugging their hair, or thrusting pins—commonly called “preens”—into their persons, especially if the sufferers were actually disquased to be attentive to their lessons, and anxious to master them.

All this, as has been stated, was silenced on our entry, while the schoolmaster who, at one and the same moment, had been engaged in instructing a little girl, who stood within his knees, in her A B C, and hearkening to the class before him, while repeating their lessons, as well as occasionally casting a severe though furtive glance around on all, arose from his seat, and advanced towards us, pocketing hastily, at the same time, the awful tawse, which ominously, as it were, I had got my eye upon.

The pedagogue was a man of middle age, lank and wiry in his person, and of a severe cast of countenance, which was not improved by the style in which he dressed his hair, it being of a mouse brown colour, with a sprinkling of grey in it, and so arranged as to resemble a bob-wig, while what grew behind was carefully tied in the shape of a longish queue, which hung down his back.

It was said, however, that at one time he had looked much better, in consequence of his head-gear being all covered with flour, but which fashion had almost then been driven out by the country, by the imposition of the tax upon hair-powder, the dominie amongst others, finding the indulgence therein rather severe upon his straightened finances to be continued.

"I have come," said my father, taking speech in hand, as the schoolmaster approached, bowing, "to place a young fellow under your charge, and one whom I hope you will be able to knock some learning into, being mightily deficient in that same myself, although pretty well up to the pricking of a chart, and the laying off of a course by compass, particularly if I have a proper landmark or headland, well laid down, to make a good departure from."



"I have no doubt whatever," answered the dominie, as he assumed one of his blandest smiles, and to do the body justice he could smile when he liked, although there was an impression in the school that when he did so, it was only as a preface to even greater severity than ordinary, like a beam of sunshine before a squall, "I have no doubt but we will make a scholar of him."

And here he patted me on the head, and clapped me on the back with a seeming kindness which almost belied the character I had heard of him, while all the boys around clapped their hands and shouted lustily, in the midst of which my father retreated towards the door for the purpose of taking his departure, under the impression that the same exuberant noise was meant as an expression of respect towards himself, and welcome to me, on becoming a fellow-labourer in the same vineyard of study.

Its cause, however, proceeded from quite a different motive, as was soon made apparent; for, immediately after the tar had closed the door behind him, and silence had again commenced its sway, a big boy arose from a back bench, and directing his attention to the master, exclaimed "Out a wee! out a wee!"

To this appeal, which was all mystery to me, but which I afterwards learnt meant that he wished to get out for a short time, the dominie gave a slight nod, whereupon the boy immediately went towards the door and vanished.

In a few minutes after, the boy appeared again, followed by my father who, addressing the schoolmaster, begged that a half holiday should be given to the school in consequence of the accession that had just been made to its numbers, and which he understood was a customary thing on such an eventful occasion.

The dominie at once graciously acceded to my father's request, and he thereupon took his final leave, while the building and the very ground beneath our feet shook with the plaudits that arose from the delighted youths who had thus gained, for the afternoon, emancipation from what no doubt they considered the greatest evil that could afflict life—namely, the necessity of learning their lessons.

Very possibly the schoolmaster was as well pleased as they



were at the idea of the promised relaxation from labour, but if so, he took his own way of concealing his joy; for, under the plea that too much applause and noise had been displayed, he drew the long tawse from his pocket, and immediately commenced an attack upon his pupils, hitting one on the left side, another on the right, a third on the back, and so on, till he ended by calling up the big boy who had been the means

of urging my father to make the agreeable demand; and, ordering him to hold out his hand, he thereupon, with

the tawse at full swing, administered ten or a dozen "palmies."

This was the first time I had ever seen the palmy torture applied, although it had been described to me, and now, I was convinced, from the wincing which the big boy displayed, that it was no small matter; for after every lick, the sufferer either blew upon his hand, or rubbed it on his thigh, or pushed it into his pocket, as though the palmies were something precious, and not to be thrown away.

Order and silence were at last restored, when the dominie, placing a small book in my hand, called the "wee spell," and which was filled with what appeared to me to be hieroglyphics, or something equally abstruse, ordered me to take a seat on a bench at some distance from him and commence to study it.

This I forthwith attempted to do, but it was all mystery to me, and in my distress I applied for some explanation to the boy sitting next me, and who was keeping up a sing-song murmuring, while he played with a top in his hands.

Immediately I was startled by something hitting me on the forehead, and then falling on the desk before me, and on looking up I discovered it to be my new acquaintance, the master's tawse, which had come spinning to me directly over the other boys' heads, having been skilfully ejected for that purpose by the master himself, who, in such operations, was an excellent marksman, no doubt from great experience in the art.

Without considering the cause of this visitation, I lifted the tawse, and desiring that the dominie should not for a moment be deprived of the use of it (my first impression being that it had by chance come to my proximity), I threw it back to him, but with the most innocent and best intentions, hitting him a smart stroke with one of the roasted fangs on the eye, and which made him start so suddenly, that the very queue that hung at his back, flew up like the tail of a lion when roused to rage by an unexpected attack.

And, indeed, the lion had been roused within him, as I soon learned full well to my cost; for, rising from his tribunal, with fire and fury flashing in his green eyes, he dealt me a lesson, which to this day I do not forget. He in short acted the part of a demon, laying on me at once, and

hitting me without choice or consideration, now on the head, now on the legs, now on the back, now on the front, and proving by the pain he caused me that the tips of the tawse had been burnt to some purpose.

He likewise kicked me mercilessly with his feet, and what it might have ended in I know not—probably a broken limb, or death itself—but for a circumstance occurring which was both lucky and singular, so far as I was concerned.

It consisted in the fact, that just at the moment of his greatest severity, he was seized from behind rudely by the queue, by some fierce and unknown hand, while another belaboured him with a ruler, which had been snatched for the purpose from off a desk hard by, and which now played about his ears as severely as the tawse had done about mine only a moment before.

This, of course, diverted the schoolmaster's attention, and though in a maniacal state of irritation, made him instantly turn round, when he encountered a visage that he little expected to have met with in his own school.

It was what must have appeared to him almost that of the devil himself, being no other than the hard-featured physiognomy of our old friend, Jaques, the monkey, who had



come unexpectedly and suddenly through one of the open windows, to the assistance of his young master, in the way described, and who was now every bit as exasperated at the dominie, as the dominie had been at me. The monkey's face was indeed a perfect picture of apish rage. Its eyes flashed fire. Its great square teeth chattered and grinned from ear to

ear; and its dilated nostrils vented something that appeared to be betwixt steam and hot water.

The first idea of the pedagogue was evidently to defend himself by means of a retaliating stroke, but missing his

mark, his fist came down with a thwack upon the desk, splitting the board, and shattering, into a thousand atoms, an ink bottle, which not only cut his fingers severely, but spattered up the ink upon his face and shirt, so that he looked truly ghastly and begrimmed.

At the same moment, the monkey, profiting by its advantage thus obtained, made a spring at his visage, and seizing him by the ears, bit his cheeks, and the point of his nose, so severely, that the dominie, in a perfect paroxysm of fear, actually turned tail, and fled towards the door, with the monkey in pursuit. Unluckily for him, however, in his haste he overlooked a well-filled satchel of books which carelessly lay on the floor, and which coming against his feet, he tripped, and came heavily to the ground, with the ape above him.

The schoolmaster was now perfectly *hors de combat*, as the French say; or, in other words, beaten by the monkey, and there he lay on the floor, seemingly in a fit, while, instead of going to his assistance, the scholars around vented their delight in his discomfiture by shouting and clapping their hands to an extent that might have graced a nobler arena.

As for the monkey, having accomplished what he no doubt deemed his duty, he coolly took his departure by the way he had entered, namely, the window, and vanished from the scene.

It was now my turn again to feel nervous for what had occurred, and fearful visions of avengement on the part of the dominie, when he should recover from his prostration, therefore flitted through my misgiving imagination.

I found myself, however, happily wrong in this anticipation. The dominie, after lying a few minutes quiescent, regained the command of his senses, and of his temporarily paralysed limbs, and rising from the floor, at sight of which resuscitation all became silent and circumspect, so great was the dread entertained towards him on the part of the scholars, suddenly walked out of the school-room, leaving us filled with wonder and amazement.

In a few minutes afterwards, the big boy that has already been alluded to, was summoned to his presence, and on his return he communicated the pleasing intelligence that there would be no more schooling that day.

Whereupon three hearty cheers having been given in honour of the auspicious event, the school, in great glee, dispersed.

On arriving at home, after the dismissal of the school, I obtained an explanation of the monkey's violent interference on my behalf. It was simply this:—Jaques, up to this day, had been accustomed to roam, comparatively at large, and in consequence of the attention and kindnesses he had received from me, was much attached to me. I had become, in short, his especial favourite.



He would have followed me anywhere, and being an ape of more than usual intelligence—indeed, many thought, in consequence of the shrewdness he displayed, and the cleverness of his tricks, that he was endowed with reason—he was a sort of constant companion to me. On this day, however, it had been resolved by my father that he should be confined to home, and for this purpose he was incarcerated in an outhouse, and, in addition, chained to a ring by means of a tarry rope, which my father had worked round his loins, and to which the links of the chain were attached.

Becoming, however, rather tired of the dull and gloomy position in which he was immured, and having nothing else to do, I suppose Jaques commenced to amuse himself by picking at the rope attached to his body, and soon unrove the strands thereof, which my father, with his marlinspike, had firmly knitted into the heart of the rope, and in course of time worked his body loose.

Being thus so far free, he poked about his prison, and discovering an old chimney, it was the work of a moment for him to ascend to its top, where he found himself in daylight, and his person completely emancipated.

Of course, what could he now do, under the circumstances, but endeavour to put himself in communication with me

again, and partly from instinct, and partly from perseverance, for he was seen visiting all my usual haunts and "howfs," as the Scottish expression has it, he soon accomplished his purpose.

He had arrived at the school just at the moment when I was becoming initiated into the ordeal of the tawse, and finding plenty of open windows, through which my screams issued, he had lost no time in entering without ceremony, and effectually acting as my champion in the way described.

Of course, in consequence of this feat, Jaques became a great and popular hero, not only in the eyes of the scholars of Dominie Lickladdie, who administered to him thereafter all sorts of luxurious gifts, from unripe apples and pears, up to sugar candy, but in those of the general denizens of the locality.

So much, indeed, did his fame extend, that my father received numerous visits from naturalists and animal fanciers, who came to witness his tricks, as well as handsome pecuniary offers from showmen and organ grinders, either to take him on hire for exhibition, or to purchase him outright.

The worthy tar, however, was above taking money for what he considered not only an intellectual being, but a friend, and therefore refused all these tempting overtures; at the same time, he was aware that Jaques was a dangerous connection; for, not only did he attract loose characters about his dwelling, who might have stolen him, as well as other property, therefrom, but he was liable to divert me from my studies—an evil which my father considered greater than all. He therefore compromised matters, connected with Jaques' dignity of position as a member of the family, by bestowing him on the son of a wealthy and exclusive couple named Jackson, who lived hard by, on an estate which they had recently purchased, and who had expressed repeatedly a desire to become the custodiers of Jaques, whom they promised to treat indulgently and kindly.

This family had been of considerable service to my mother before my father's arrival, having given her continuous employment as a washerwoman, and for which the sailor felt gratitude.

Of course, the loss of Jaques to me, as well as to my com-

panions at the school, was much felt; for, in case of Dominie Lickladdie again attacking any of us, where were we to find a champion to relieve us from his viciousness and rage?

Luckily, however, such services were no longer likely to be required, a fact which we discovered on the very next day that we attended school; for, on again assembling, we found the schoolmaster had become a very much changed, and, indeed, reformed man.

He came limping into the room, assisted by a staff,



in consequence of a severe sprain which he had received in falling, and he had patches of gold-beater's skin on his cheeks, where the monkey had indented his teeth; while his right arm and hand, which so dexterously and fiercely had swayed the fearful tawse, were tied up in a sling, composed of his best Indian silk handkerchief, which he was in the habit of sporting upon the occa-

sion of public examinations of the school, when the minister of the parish, and some of the gentry of the neighbourhood, were in the habit of attending.

Dominie Lickladdie, from these misfortunes, was unable, physically, to be as severe as he had been. He likewise had been cowed by the fright he had got, and, in addition, it was said, had been crowed over by his wife, who had always told him that his severity would lead to the disorganisation of his school, and consequently to the misfortune of himself and his family.

The dominie, from that day forth, became, as has been told, a wonderfully changed and improved man, his tawse were completely laid aside, and his system of teaching made to depend upon kindly admonition and advice, rather than upon cuffs, kicks, pulling of ears, rugging of hair, palmies, and other cruelties, that had formed the basis of his previous treatment.

CHAPTER XI.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

That bairn hath perfect blessedness
Who getteth his free will
To guzzle in a sweetie shop,
And crunch, and cram his fill.

There, seated in a corner chair,
He taketh his delight
In sugar bools, and lemon drops,
From morning until night.

Who wouldn't thus be young again?
Who wouldn't be a boy?
Defying care, and toil, and pain,
And revelling in joy!

The Goosebuds Poet.

I now studied pretty hard, and constantly, and indeed made considerable proficiency at Dominie Lickladdie's school, for which advantage, however, I must acknowledge myself indebted to my father, who, although—as he was in the habit of saying—“no hand at the book himself,” had a due appreciation of the advantages of learning. The worthy tar therefore took care that, on returning home, after school hours, I should not idly throw my books aside, but that I should prepare myself for next day's work, by learning well, by heart, the lessons that had been assigned to me by Dominie Lickladdie.

This is a good plan, and may be generally recommended for imitation, to fathers of families who have boys prone to be idle, and more inclined to play than study after school

hours, although such a course may not be very popular with the boys themselves.

For my part I found my lessons hard enough to learn, but on comparing the position I was enjoying with that which I had endured when I was a ragged, starving urchin, obtaining a precarious existence in the Goosedubbs, I was induced to take advantage of the now comparatively happy day, and worked away, so that I soon became not only a proficient in my studies, but a favourite with the master.

But Dominie Lickladdie had instituted confidence between himself and the scholars, by throwing aside the use of the tawse, and—instead of carrying them about threateningly, or lashing the desks with them, or throwing them at urchins as a sign for them to come up to his throne and be punished—by hanging them on a nail behind his chair more as an emblem of his authority and power, than as an implement of use, like the sceptres and crowns of ordinary kings who, reversing the system of the olden time, now neither carry the former in their hands as walking sticks, nor wear the latter on their heads as smoking caps, but merely have them borne before them at gee-gaw shows, or simply represented amidst heraldic emblazonry.

This reformation in Dominie Lickladdie's system was understood, on all sides, to have been brought about by the humiliation which he had undergone in the case of his defeat



by Jaques, the ape. He had never been the same man, or rather the same pedagogue, since then; but on the contrary, he had become a much improved one. He was more patient with the boys and girls; more persuasive, and more explanatory. He did not urge them so hard as he had formerly done. He gave them time, as it were, to pick their steps in the rough road of learning; to

free their feet from the ruts and sloughs they occasionally

stuck in ; and to get back to the proper path, when they unwittingly deviated therefrom. He led them more, and drove them less.

The consequences rewarded him, and what was equally gratifying, they rewarded the boys. A spirit of kindness sprung up betwixt master and scholar, which, in a short time, led to the happiest results. The duty of teaching with him became a pleasure, and the ordeal of learning with them a gratification.

Occasionally, no doubt, the spirit of the old Adam would indicate itself within him. A dull boy would, in spite of the dominie's efforts, remain provokingly obtuse ; or a headstrong boy would be vexatiously careless ; whereupon the nettled pedagogue would resort to some of his ancient grins and grinding of teeth, which would set the school in a roar of laughter, in which he would generously join ; or, forgetting himself, he would testily turn round, as if to seize the tawse, but shrinking therefrom, he would let them alone, to be greeted, for the self-denial, by a boisterous cheer, amidst which he blushed and bowed, and resumed his equanimity.

The dominie, it may be said, was now a popular man with his scholars. Instead of being shunned, he was sought. There were few truants, and those who had formerly played such parts, were steady from a dread of dismissal out and out. New scholars flocked to him ; and the little schoolroom, in consequence, was literally crammed, to such an extent indeed, that the heritors became alarmed lest they should be required to put their hands in their pockets and build further accommodation.

But a more substantial proof of Mr. Lickladdie's improved position with his pupils, than that of mere lip-praise, soon indicated itself in a way, that of all others could not but be most agreeable to him, for it enriched his exchequer ; and even as a rich exchequer always tells beneficially on the domestic comfort of a State, so did it on that of the pedagogue's hearth and ha'. His wife, who it was understood had bitterly felt the demeanment and humiliation which he had undergone on the memorable occasion of his encounter with Jaques, and who not improbably had resented it on her husband's head, in the shape of curtain lectures and

other penances, which only wives can inflict—and no wives are more potent in the use of such moral missiles than those of despots—began to find that the true elements of connubial bliss flowed upon her, giving her not only the means of filling the “kail pot,” but of adorning herself and the bairns with comfortable and braw dresses. And thus the poor schoolmaster’s cup of joy came to be filled to overflowing in more ways than one.

The dominie’s rising prosperity demonstrated itself prominently at the succeeding quarter’s collection of school fees; more decidedly at the next; and beyond all doubt at the next again. But it outstripped itself on the occasion of Candlemas, when the “offerings,” as they were called, of that day, literally overburdened him.

I can, even at this distant date, recall the joy and happiness that on that memorable day was felt on all hands, from the schoolmaster himself who towered in his rostrum, to the *wee-est* lassie who thumbed her *wee-spell*.

The first thing that we observed on entering the school-room that morning—which we did in our Sunday’s best clothes—instead of the ordinary piles of slates and books and boards that usually burdened the oblong table which stretched across the upper part of the room, in the vicinity of the schoolmaster’s elevated seat, was a display of luxurious delicacies that might have rivalled those usually seen on the counter of a confectioner or pastry cook’s shop.

The table for the nonce had been covered by the best damask cloth of the dominie’s guidwife, new out of the fold, while on it were placed pyramids of oranges and apples, piles of penny cheese-cakes, and twopenny tarts, hillocks of scones and sandwiches, and blocks of ginger bread, short bread, and parliament cakes.

Interspersed amongst these were smaller dishes, containing nuts, raisins, sweeties, almonds, ginger-snaps, Gibraltar rock, and other descriptions of “gundy,” quite sufficient to have disarranged the system of all the bairns in the parish, and to have brought into requisition the services of Doctor Pukely for weeks to come.

There was in addition, however, perhaps as an antidote against such a bane, placed in a conspicuous part of the table, a large rich China punch bowl, having a long ebony-handled

ladle, the cup of which was of silver, with a golden guinea sticking in its base, and around this bowl were sugar, lemons, and a jolly bottle of old Jamaica rum; while, on a blazing fire in the back ground, steamed in full puff a kettle containing the boiling water with which the punch was to be manufactured.

Opposite this battery of good things stood Dominie Lickladdie, adorned in his best "stand of blacks," that is, dressed in his Sunday suit, consisting of a fine black coat, black velvet vest, black silk breeches, and silk stockings, with shining shoes and buckles to match, while in keeping with these his hair had been frizzed, greased, and powdered, and his queue wrapped in a new silk ribbon. He wore likewise his best frilled shirt, and a snow white cambric neckerchief, and altogether looked as well and respectable as did the minister on an examination day.



The boys now set up a hilarious cheer, as a recognition of the tempting display upon the table, which having ended in a jubilant clapping of hands, and rattling of hooves, the delivery of the offerings or gifts immediately commenced in alphabetical order.

What sums the pupils gave as offerings were immediately announced by the master to the school, accompanied by a presentation of oranges, apples, and confectionery, on his part, in keeping with the amount. And it was interesting to observe, that while some boys and girls came away moderately compensated, and not at all overburdened with the good things, others were abundantly rewarded, and, indeed, unable to regain their seats, without dropping, on this side an apple, or on that an orange, which caused a diverting scramble, for possession thereof, amongst the crowd of youths through which they passed.

The collection of the Candlemas offerings being at last

accomplished, much to the satisfaction of the master, the great matter of speculation amongst the scholars came now to be, who were likely to have the glory conferred upon them of being declared the King and Queen of the day, in virtue of having bestowed the largest gifts; and when it was announced that Jock Poke, and Babbie Bowster, had, respectively, proved their titles to the crowns, immediately a loud burst of applause shook the building, although it must not be concealed that some joined in it with a tear in their e'e and a pang in their heart, in consequence of the happy appointment not having fallen to them.

Little consideration, however, was given to the circumstances that this one would have been King had his father only given him a guinea to present instead of a one pound note; or this one Queen, had her mother only added another dollar—foreign dollars at that period being part of the circulation of the country—for now the whole school rose, and placing Jock Poke and Babbie Bowster, cheek by jowl, on the shoulders of some of the biggest and strongest boys, they were carried to the open air, adorned with paper crowns, painted and emblazoned with gold leaf, and marched throughout the village, the rest of the boys and girls, in pairs, following in the procession.

This ceremony having been duly performed, and the happy regal couple greeted with the cheers and compliments of the villagers, to their hearts content, the procession returned to the schoolroom, where, by this time, the dominie had mixed the ingredients of the punch, which, after another supply of oranges, apples, tarts, and cheese-cakes, had been distributed, accompanied with nuts, sweeties, and so on, to the company, the said punch was doled out in glasses to all around, the dominie giving, in succession, the usual loyal and patriotic toasts of the day.

Every credit, however, must be given to the dominie for the manner in which he managed this latter part of the banquet, for he used due discrimination, in regulating the supply of the ardent element, to the age and size of the recipients, so that no unnecessary intoxication should take place, although it must be confessed at this time of day that the distribution of such amongst children, big or small, was a very improper thing, and is only excusable in the eyes of

sent *reformed* generation, in consequence of its having
e of the customs of that barbarous era.*

nunch bowl, the bottles, the glasses, and the empty dishes
l contained so many good things,—and which by this
re safely stowed away, partly in the stomachs and
n the pockets of the children,—were now all removed
e table, the damask cloth folded up, the table itself
against the wall, and all the desks piled up and the
emoved to the sides of the room, so as to make the
space clear, when immediately the dominie, having
d a chair and produced a fiddle—he being a good
: performer on the violin—all stood up to dance, the
id Queen leading off.

any person taken time to study the dominie's visage
moment, he could not have failed to have been im-
with the sight. It was the very index of happiness
evolence, and no one could have supposed that frowns
, such as stood recorded against him, especially when
cised the ordeal of the tawse, could have ever de-
it.

all remembrance of harshness was banished at this
m the minds, both of the scholars and the dominie.
two, three, and away you go!" he exclaimed, with a



ccompaniment on the violin, and immediately the
d Queen were seen capering with "life and mettle

* NORR D.—Candlemas Offerings. See *Appendix*.

in their heels," as they led off in a country dance, the Queen, in particular, showing off her dress and figure to the best advantage.

The fun now became "fast and furious." The country dance was succeeded by reels and Highland flings, and merry-go-rounds, and numerous other rustic dances of general and local designation, but all of which were attended with considerable vivacity, and no small quantity of fatigue. In the language of the Goosedubbs Poet,

" We bobbit, we noddit,
We jumpit, we thumpit,
We chatter'd, we patter'd,
 We march'd, and we sat;
We shuffled, we scuffled,
We puttet, we cuttet,
We stottit, we trottit,
 We gallop'd, and swat!"

In short, we almost wore ourselves out. But what is singular, we never seemed to tire the dominie, who fiddled away as if the duty were more a relaxation than an exercise.

The afternoon was now drawing on. The sun was well in the west for a February evening, and the room was beginning to get darkish, though every face and eye were still bright and animated, when the dominie, by way of *finale*, sprung from the spot on which he had stood till now fiddling with fury. He now appeared in a new phase, namely, as a good dancer, in addition to being a good fiddler; for, still keeping "kittling hair on thairms," he bobbed to this one, set to that one, reeled with a third, and pirouetted with a fourth, every one being his partner for the nonce, as the case might be.

At last he gave a certain signal, when immediately the Queen caught him by the coat-tails, the King catching her in succession, and so on every one in turn, while forming as it were a chain or tail, and thus the hilarity was complete; for the dominie at the head, fiddling away, led us meanderingly about and about, even to the outside of the school-room, and around the playground, like an enormous serpent, with varied gyrations, as though they never would end.

Everything, however, must end. The dominie, on getting under cover again, at last gave two or three agile kicks to

sound of as many rasps of his bow, and suddenly bringing the momentum we had acquired to a pause, declared the ended—



“ When each took off his several way,
Resolved to meet some other day ! ”

CHAPTER XII

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

'Tis sad to leave those social friends,
With whom we dally mingle;
But sadder 'tis to leave the dear
Wee prattlers round our ingle.

No foreign sun beams like our hearth—
No foreign climate blesses
The wandering exile, who bewails
His bairnies' lost carcases.

The Goosedubbs Poet.

A CONSIDERABLE space of time had now passed away since my father had come amongst us, to confer the benefits of his guardianship and means; and, during that period, it may be said, he had greatly enjoyed the advantages thereof himself. As he observed, "it put new life in him to have the privilege of a quiet and happy home, instead of being obliged to buffet about at sea; and to behold his wife contented, and his children thriving;" for Sissy now was getting up, and he was beginning to think of giving her some schooling, such as he was conferring upon myself.

The old sailor, however, as he himself remarked, "had never done a hand's turn" during the period referred to, and, in consequence, the little sum which he had brought with him had become nearly exhausted.

"Ah!" he would exclaim, as he took an old stocking, which he kept concealed in a cunning nook of our dwelling, and thrust his fist into it, "this old *hogger* is getting as lank as the fo'castle cat of a ship, whose crew is placed on short

nce, on a long voyage. There can be no crumbs where nit and a gill of water are served out, and there can be e where there are no crumbs, and so the cat becomes eton, even as this poor purse is!"

lack!" he would continue, as he drew out the two ee guineas, and as

dollars, which it only contained, and dropped them back with a melancholy

"there is a terrible for the worse here. mber when this stock-s so round and heavy, we made the land, used to doubt if I swim ashore with it



event of our being

ed. Now, however, such a contingency could give me bread, for the hogger might almost float of itself!"

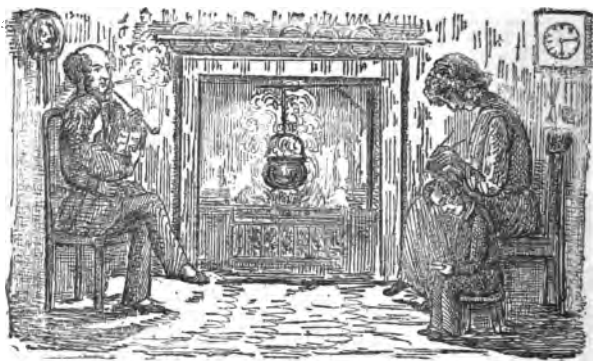
good old sailor, in short, evidently felt himself to be k. His means were exhausted, and he had it not in wer to replenish them, without making some effort, at he could only do on the element which he was omed to traverse, and not on the land, where he was fish out of the water.

was distressing for us all, in more ways than one, to e poor man now suffering so much mental anguish, and became more intense every day. We felt for him, but ng this, we had to feel for ourselves, for in him had been intain of our supply, and with him all would stop, and rative poverty come again upon us. For days and nights uld sit, with Sissy on his knee, at his "ingle side," ecoming more and more dear to him, as he felt that he oon leave it, and smoke his pipe, or turn the quid in outh from one cheek to the other, in the midst of his ations. But nothing could be made out of these in y of re-assurance.

see what it must come to," he would at last exclaim, bitter knitting of his brow, "I must go to sea again. t rig out this shaky and lumbering hull, and take to

the hand reefing and steering again; and, instead of sitting snugly at the lee side of this kindly hearth, with you all around me, I must stow myself away in a dark, damp, and dingy fore-castle, to be called at all hours, and to go aloft whether it be night or noon, or whether it be calm or blowing a hurricane!"

Of course, my mother and I, who were the only other portion of the family that could be expected to do anything, were unable to alleviate his anxieties; for, although she expressed her resolution to work from sunrise to gloaming, at the soap suds, in the service of any one who would employ her, or knit, evidently, stockings at home; and I protested



my readiness to go to farm work again, or any employment that would produce a wage; and, although, as in all such cases, our sanguineness engendered hopes of success far beyond what are generally realised in practice, the proud old salt rejected them entirely.

"No, no, no!" he cried, "such a course I'll never steer as that. I'll never be a skulker, and keep the deck while others go aloft. I'll never ask my messmates to do my work, while I lie in my crib. I'll never drink the grog of laziness, or chew the biscuit of idleness!"

After talking thus for a week or two, during which time he, as it were, was girding up the loins of his resolution, and, in some respects, he appeared to be doing this even physically, for he was ever hitching up the slack of his

trowsers, and starting from his seat, and taking a look at the little room before he resumed it again. He jumped up, exclaiming, "It won't do to go on any longer in this here course, without taking a cast of the lead, to find out what are the soundings. It won't do to carry on in a fog; and when, perhaps, sandbanks are about us, we'll be wrecked before we're half way. So, hark you, old girl; bouse out my kit and kit, and I'll be off, to-morrow morning early, and get a ship. Better a finger off than always being a beggar!"

The next morning, accordingly, notwithstanding our remonstrances, long before dawn, although the sun rose early at this season of the year, my father was afoot, and he expressed it, "fully rigged out," and ready to start on his departure. And as it had been arranged that I should accompany him to Greenock, the port at which he intended to get a ship, for the purpose of assisting him in getting his kit and hammock, and, in particular, for that of going back to my mother his "lines," whereby, for a certain period, she would be enabled to draw, every month, a portion of his wages, while he was at sea, I was likewise found in something like hearty spirits at the prospect of it, although my poor father's state of mind was quite the

reverse of every other action, however, of the brave sailor, his departure was arranged without any shrinking or hanging in; and, even for the nonce, he had renounced the privilege of indulging in a "civil growl" at the prospect of his fate. So, after partaking of as hearty a breakfast as the circumstances of the case would permit, in which we all joined, including his sister, who had come from home for the purpose, he "hove himself short in the morning," as he expressed it, "tripped his anchor, shook the foretopsail, hoisted his foretopsail, ran up his flying-jib, and his spanker, and so, bore away, under easy sail," on the dusty road which now lay before us; not, however, without having he hugged us all, and, in particular, "sworn a good word or two" in our favour, placing around little Sissy's head, in the midst of his tears and nautical caresses, a neat silken chain, which he had reserved for the purpose of that moment.

A minute after, we were upon the road, and hastening towards Glasgow, he carrying the hammock and I the kit, and thus we proceeded till we attained the Broomielaw bridge, where we halted, partly for rest, and partly for a little consultation as to further progress.



There were three courses left to our choice as to our further procedure, and it was regarding these that we brought up for a parley. There was the "long coach," which, of course, went by the road, and which would pass the

spot where we now paused, in a short time. There was next, the "fly-boat," a sort of wherry, which was propelled by the wind when it was favourable, and by oar when it was otherwise. And there was the steamboat, that had only recently been invented, and placed as a public conveyance on Clyde, but which was considered, at that time, a sort of dangerous mode of locomotion, only to be taken advantage of by those who were extra bold, or who did not put much value on their lives.

The first named, was the most expensive of the kind, although considered the safest and the surest; but my poor father hesitated about taking it on account of the state of his finances, which called for the exercise of the strictest economy that could be followed. The second was extremely slow and uncertain, though cheap, and therefore more in accordance with our circumstances. And the last was entirely unknown to us, excepting through hearsay; it being understood, however, to be neither very dear nor very cheap, while it was, upon the whole, rather speedy, unless overtaken by unfavourable weather.

"I have a considerable desire," said my father, "to try this new-fangled mode of navigation, which goes with neither wind, tide, nor oars, if it were only safe. And were it only myself, unaccompanied by you, that had to go by it, I would not hesitate a moment, for what does it signify, whether this old hull be wrecked or blown up. But Jack Splice, who

made a voyage in the craft lately, assures me she is as dangerous as a fire-raft, and that she will go up in the air some day like a rocket, or sink under foot like a foundering wreck!"

Just as he said this, we saw the long coach coming up, which, before my father had made up his mind regarding it, rapidly passed, the horses going at a brisk trot; while, about the same time, the fly-boat pulled out to the stream, loaded with passengers for the sea-coast, and likewise proceeded on her way.

We could very easily have still got on board the latter, by trotting after her by the side of the river, and hailing her to stop, and take us on board; but here the superstition of the sailor presented itself against that measure, for, as he said, it never boded luck for any craft, to bring up or turn back, after making a fair start, and a ship that did so was always as sure to meet dangers and difficulties, as one that sailed on a Friday.*

The steamboat was, therefore, now the only resource left to us, and to reach her we walked a short distance along the quay, to a spot where she lay smoking, fizzing, and puffing off steam, a sight which made my father laugh heartily, as he scanned her from stem to stern, and pronounced her to be the "rummest looking craft" he had ever come alongside of in any latitude. "I have seen canoes of savages," he said, "in the Pacific Ocean; I have seen catamarans amongst the Madras surfs; I have seen Junks in the Chinese seas; but I never beheld a thing like this, with flappers at her side, and appearing more like a jackass betwixt a couple of hampers of greens, than a Christian ship!"



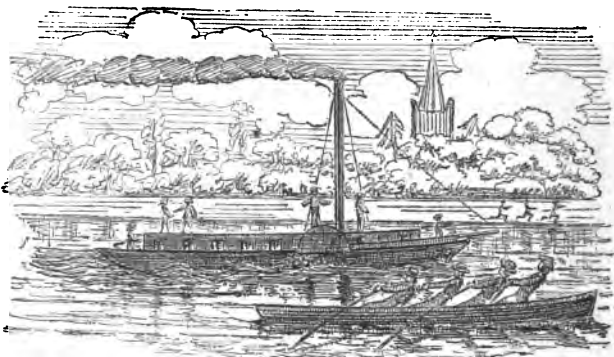
We, however, stepped on board the steamer, which as

* There is a determined prejudice amongst sailors (or, at all events, it used to exist), against going to sea, on a foreign voyage, on a Friday; and it is narrated, that to break it down, an enlightened shipowner once tried the following experiment:—He built a vessel, which he named the Friday; placed in her a captain of the name of Friday; and despatched her on a Friday. She accordingly proceeded on her voyage, and—was never heard of more!

yet had only two or three other passengers in her, although it was nearly an hour after her advertised time of starting, and a boy kept blowing lustily and monotonously a large tin trumpet, as an inducement, seemingly, for people to crowd towards her.

The summons, however, was to little purpose, for few additional people found their way on board, and these my father considered quite sufficient; for, I remember, as each placed his foot upon her gunwale, for the purpose of stepping upon her deck, she listed over as though she would have upset—thus furnishing the old sailor with an excuse, as it were, for pronouncing her to be a paltry, crank thing, that would, some day or other, come to grief, and then there would be an end to such absurd things as steamboats, that pretended to sail against the ordinary laws of nature.

The little vessel at last started, and proceeded briskly, and



what I considered to be, speedily, on her route—although a row boat, and some boys ashore, kept up with us for a time—the cross head of her engine jumping up and down, much to my amazement, like a thing of life, while her paddles threw up a surf on either shore of the river. We passed green pasturages, dotted with grazing kine, and villas, and groves, and fields of waving corn, all which interested me much, and filled my inexperienced mind with joy, for I had never been so far at sea before, and I was beginning to wonder how long such pleasing variety would last, when

suddenly the engine stopped working, and the steam commenced to roar from the funnel head, which set everybody on board a-thinking that their last hour had arrived, and that they were about to be blown into the air, in keeping with the many predictions that had been uttered as to such a contingency.

Our alarm, however, was soon calmed down, by the gratifying assurance of the captain, that nothing was wrong, and that what had happened was quite a usual occurrence, the engineer having only stopped the machinery for the purpose of greasing and oiling some of its working parts, as well as to poke up his fires, and refresh them with further fuel.

It appeared to us that there was a double motive for stopping the vessel, for the captain and pilot now left the deck and went below, and from the activity which was displayed by the steward, it was evident that they likewise were oiling *their* machinery, and poking up and refreshing their flues with something not only combustible but comfortable.

After a short period thus satisfactorily spent in re-invigorating both boat and crew, the machinery was again set a-going, the cross head jumped and fell with approved jolt, and the paddles pattered with regular rotation; while we skimmed the smooth surface, as though borne on the back of a swan, or duck, everything promising a satisfactory voyage, which made my father rub his hands with glee, and declare that steamboats were not such bad things after all.

The river now began to assume a broader appearance; long lagoons or mud banks presented themselves, from amidst the luxuriant vegetation of which, numerous strings of wild ducks, disturbed by the wave of the paddles, would start and wend their way inland. Sandbanks and sinuosities likewise appeared, and the captain and pilot began to look out with anxiety as to the navigation.

The day, however, as my father remarked, was a long one, and he therefore calculated not only that it would serve to bring us to our destination before sundown, but that it would be attended with fair and benignant weather.

In this comforting surmise, however, we were not destined long to proceed. Ere we had accomplished a half of our distance, the little steamer stuck hard and fast on a bank, from which, with all our efforts, she could not be extricated,

although the engine was backed, and even a kedge and hawser were run out, on which we all pulled, passengers as well as crew, with hearty goodwill. The steamer, in short, was now fairly aground, and as the tide, upon which we had depended as a favourable circumstance connected with our voyage, was fast ebbing, there was nothing left for us but to wait patiently for its flowing again, so as to float her off; and this we found would consume, at least, some four or five hours of our precious time.

These hours proved to me to be a dull, tedious, and hungry period; and had it not been for the goodness of some of the passengers on board, I believe I literally would have starved; for we were too poor to be able to pay the steward for any of the regular meals that we saw going on, and we had been too improvident to bring any supplies with us on leaving home.

At last we started again, though now far on in the day, and proceeded on our voyage. Our speed, however, was found to be very different from what it had been, but this, it was explained to me by my father, was in consequence of the tide being against, instead of with us, as before had been the case.

Still we progressed, the engine keeping jolting and the paddles clattering, with the aid of an occasional stoppage for the purpose of oiling the machinery and refreshing the furnaces—and in parenthesis be it said, the crew—and thus we span out as weary an evening as ever fell to my lot to pass before, for as we attained the wider portion of the river, or rather the frith thereof, a pretty smart breeze sprung up, which set the little cock-boat a-bobbing, making many of the passengers sea-sick, and protracting the voyage to some hours beyond midnight, when we at last were landed on the wet quays of Greenock, weary and worn-out with hunger and fatigue.

CHAPTER XIII.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Fast falls the rain, loud roars the wind,
Around the poor man's head,
While Croesus, 'neath his canopy,
Hugs his luxurious bed.

Still, there's a Power above us all,
And Lazarus may find—
Though left to shift, as best he may—
That Providence is kind!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

ER landing upon the Greenock quay, we found no one
tever stirring, and but for the few passengers that had
e down the river by the steamer, and who were now
kly, and no doubt gladly, trotting to their respective
es, so as to get shelter from a smart drizzle of rain that
sual was falling in this aqueous locality, it would have
completely deserted. There was scarcely a light either
uide us, for the few oil lamps that then illuminated the
rs and shipping, were either burned out or blown out,
all that was to be seen was a solitary ray that shone
a distant lane, and which was the only thing that
us promise of aid in our present circumstances.

Aye, here we are at last landed," said my father, who
ied to know the place, in common with many other sea-
s that he had frequented under the circumstances of his
pation as a sailor, "and a more dismal night to bring up
ich a roadstead we could not have fallen upon. How-
," he continued, as his eye caught the flickering light
has already been noticed, "God be thanked, old Betsy

Breezer hasn't doused her gleam yet, and there we'll get something to eat and drink, and perhaps a seat at her fire, that will, at all events, tide us over till daylight makes its appearance."

We accordingly proceeded towards the light that indicated the establishment of the said Betsy Breezer, which, on a nearer approach, we found to be a little low-roofed shop, having one window, and a low door, to enter which my father, though not tall, had to stoop considerably, while I followed in his wake.

On putting our noses, however, within its precincts, we were almost fain to withdraw them again, for we were met by a stifling odour of tobacco smoke and other noxious fumes and vapours, that were far from being agreeable; while, at the same time, our ears were stunned and our senses confused by a Babel of noise proceeding from a crowd of people within, some of whom were carousing, some eating, and some rolling about, while all seemed more or less drunk and disorderly.

The place was, in short, one of those low "howfs," or dens, common in maritime ports, where the lowest of the low congregate, and where sailors fall in with crimps, who fill them drunk and cheat them of their monthly lines, to the detriment of their health, and the ruin of the wives and families they leave behind.

From this place, therefore, we were glad to retreat immediately, after my father had procured as much food as was necessary to satisfy our craving hunger, and which consisted



of some dark-coloured tripe stuck betwixt two layers of grim-looking bread, which welcome supply was dealt out by the horny hands of Dame Breezer herself, and for which my father paid sixpence, at the ring of which coin on the dirty counter, I observed several forbidding heads thrust out of the back shop, attracted, no doubt, by the

promising sound of the silver, but which heads were drawn

back as soon as it was observed that Betsy was only performing a mercantile transaction. I however remarked one of them as belonging to a well-known vagabond that used to frequent my mother's garret in the Goosedubbs, during the period of her doubtful days, and who was known under the soubriquet of the "Bald Billygoat," from the circumstance that what should have graced his crown, in the shape of hirsute luxuriance, had chosen rather to adorn the under part of his chin in the form of a grisly beard, giving him thereby something of the appearance of the Alpine animal from which he derived his nickname. As the Bald Billygoat's appearance did not in my opinion, from what I recollected of his character and sentiments, promise any particular good to us, I communicated to my father my suspicions regarding him, and we therefore retreated again towards the quay, as being even a more hospitable locality than that which we had left, to pass the night in. "Oh! if there's a rascal in Greenock," replied the old sailor, "he's sure to be found in Bet Breezer's, particularly if a ship is about to sail, and where, in consequence, he can get hold of poor sailors to plunder and rob."

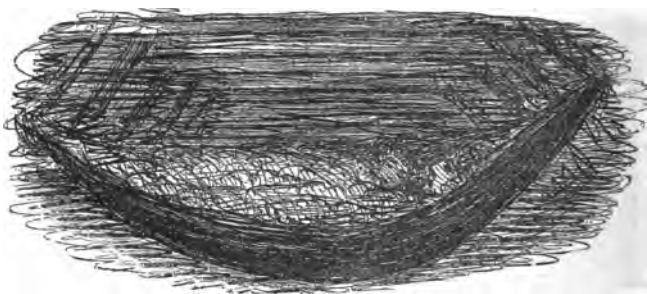
We now regained the bleak and comfortless quay, intending to skulk about any sheltered spot we might fall upon, until daylight should make its appearance; but by this time the breeze, which had taken off, had been succeeded by a pretty hard pelt of rain, and this promising to increase, we were glad when we stumbled at last upon an old wooden shed, partly closed in at one end, and into it we quickly retreated, in the hope that we had at last found a spot where we could pass the rest of the night, I being by this time perfectly overcome with fatigue and drowsiness. In this modest expectation we were not disappointed. This shed, from the savour of it, had been used as a temporary place for storing cargo, while being either put on board or taken from the holds of vessels, and was now unoccupied, thus giving us reason to conclude that we might take possession of its accommodation, such as it was, without being considered as trespassers.

My father, however, being an old sailor, resolved that it should be turned to a better purpose than that of a mere

corner to lie down within; for feeling with his hands, by the aid of an empty box that lay about, and on which he stood, that above were good substantial beams stretching across, he quickly unpacked his hammock, and fixing the end chords thereof to two of these beams, he declared that we should now have a snooze in what he termed the best of beds, namely, a well-strung hammock, though the fresh air should be whistling around our heads.

He then mounted first into the hammock, securing the kit into which he had stowed our jackets and shoes to the other beams above, and then assisted me up likewise, for the purpose of lying alongside of him.

I confess that this operation was rather difficult and ticklish, and had it not been that the sailor had been accustomed to such manœuvring on board ship, and that I clung with the tenacity of a cat to the hammock, I verily believe that both of us would soon have come to the ground again. Partly, however, in consequence of never letting go my hold with one hand, and partly by steadying myself with the other, by means of the beam above, we were at last righted, and I now found to my joy that I was nestled snugly in the old fellow's embrace, the flaps of the hammock closing in at our sides and almost around us.



"Ah!" chuckled the tar, who looked upon every domestic element, connected with the furnishing of a ship, as being perfection, "here we are at last, snugger than in a feather bed, and what is better, it is even softer; while on board ship—blow hard or blow low—it is always the same, neither

being affected by pitching or rolling. So, hark you, take a pull on the tackle of your eyelids, and see if we can bottle off some sleep ere the morning bells begin to ring!"

This recommendation was almost unnecessary, and I daresay without it I would have been immediately in the land of dreams; but just at this moment we heard the sound of rough voices, and soon recognised that they pertained to company that we would rather have dispensed with. The voices, in short, were those of two ruffians, one of whom I discovered, from the remembrance of its tone, to be that of the Bald Billygoat, and knowing very well what might be the consequences if we were discovered, I whispered my fears to my father, who by this time had raised himself, sitting-ways, up to be ready for any emergency.

The villains were evidently plotting some mischief; but, under the impression that no one overheard them, they walked towards the dark end of the shed where we lay ensconced, talking in what sailors denominate a horse-whisper, that is, loud enough to be heard by any one in their vicinity that had ordinary sharp ears.

This one was to get hold of this sailor, filling him drunk; and that one of that sailor, inveigling him to some rookery;—there they were to hocus him, and to rob him, and to detain him from the ship, that was about to sail, till he had paid rescue. They were afterwards to take the road for Glasgow, concealing themselves amidst the dense woods that skirted its course when danger made its appearance, and at nightfall they were to issue therefrom and rob any unfortunate passenger they might fall in with, murdering him if necessary.

Just as they had settled this scheme to their satisfaction, during the debate on which they had approached uncomfortably near to us, my father, who, as has been said, had raised himself upon the hammock, clapped his two hands to his mouth, and bellowed out, in the most unearthly voice I ever heard, "Ah! Bald Billygoat, Bald Billygoat, it is then that I, the devil, will get hold of you and your precious companion!" or words to that effect, which, at the same time, were garnished with a few expressions of a condemnatory description, peculiar to sailors.

He then applied to his mouth a silver boatswain's whistle,

which he always carried about with him, attached to a whip-



cord which was strung around his neck, and performing thereon as an accompaniment to the fearful announcement he had made, that peculiar birr-whirr-jirr-r-r whistle that first-class boatswains are alone up to, he so alarmed the Billygoat and his companion that off they ran with the speed of lightning, believing, seemingly, that his satanic majesty himself was after them, if I might judge

from the rapidity with which their opaque bodies vanished in the grey distance, at the open end of the shed, slight daylight by this time having commenced to make its appearance.

"Now," said my father, "we may rest comfortably, for we'll be no longer disturbed by these rascals. Catch them come back to encounter again my birr-jirr-whirr, with which I have sent off, in my day, the Nigger, the Chinaman, and the Caffre, and why not a vile, loafing, Goosedubbs set of thieves?"

It was even as my father had anticipated, neither the Billygoat nor any other interloper disturbed our further repose, which was refreshing, profound, and continuous till the bells began ringing at five o'clock in the morning, by which time it was broad daylight, with an unclouded sky and bright sunshine.

CHAPTER XIV.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

The sails flap rudely on the masts,
The blocks and pulleys creak,
The bright blue-peter streams aloft,
The anchor is a-peak.

The yards are braced round to the breeze,
Taut is each shroud and stay,
The topsails and the courses swell,
The ship hies on her way!

The Goosedu's Poet.

ERE the morning bells had ceased ringing, we were both afoot; the hammock was lashed up again, and our toilet performed, in the shape of an ablution by means of the plentiful supply of salt water that flowed around the quay. We needed neither soap, nor nail brush, nor tooth powder, nor hair brush; nor did we feel the want of velvet dressing robes, nor worked slippers, nor soft carpets underneath. We, in short, were almost as independent, under the circumstances, as the honest dog—we gave ourselves a shake, and we were dressed for the day!

By this time the quay, that had been so lonely and deserted the night before, were populated and looking life-like. The artisan came sauntering along carrying the implements of his



craft, and looking out for the object on which he was to exercise them. The carter, with his horse and dray, came rattling to the ship's side to carry off the cargo; and the seaman came rolling onwards to board his craft, while hitching up his canvas trousers and squirting the 'bacco juice from side to side.

As the bell ceased ringing, the toil of the day had commenced, and around were heard the many and varied sounds that proceeded from healthy labour—the clattering of windlasses, the creaking of blocks, the thumping of mallets, and the hearty “heave-oich-oich” of the mariner, as he pulled, hauled, and belayed.

Of course, our look-out was to find a ship for my father, and on gazing about our hearts had many misgivings as to that chance, for there were few vessels in the harbour, and such as they were, with the exception of the smaller ones, all were seemingly lying principally in ordinary, or getting overhauled in the dry-docks; and in such circumstances requiring more the aid of the carpenter or the rigger, than that of the seaman. Independently of these ominous signs, we found, on inquiry, that there would not be a vessel fitting-out for sea for many weeks, the only ship that had endowed the port, in that way, with anything like vitality, having left the harbour the day before, and she was now lying at the tail of the bank, or roadstead, with her blue-peter flying, and expected to be under weigh every minute. Our informant likewise instructed us, that but for the circumstance that her owner was expected from Glasgow with his final despatches, she would have been off last night, and that the moment he arrived she would sail.

This piece of information rather put my poor father out, for if he were disappointed in getting an engagement, he would require either to return to Glasgow or to proceed on to Liverpool for a ship, and seeing that his purse was extremely low, the expense of either course considerably appalled him.

As we stood on the quay absorbed in the contemplation of this difficulty, we saw a small boat, which had left the ship in the offing some time previously, approaching the landing-place, in the stern sheets of which sat a well-dressed sailor man, whom we soon learned was the mate of the ship, and

who had been dispatched to bring on board two of the crew who had got leave of absence the day before, and who, in violation of their promise, had failed to join the vessel again.

"Here's a chance!" said the old fellow, on learning this news, "mayhap they will not cast up in time, and I may get one of the vacant berths."

As he expressed this hope he pressed forward to examine the officer of the ship, who, by this time, had left the boat and was coming up the stair that led to the quay, and which proceeding, as soon as he had reached it, brought him full in front of my father, on whom, in consequence of his being a passable-looking able-bodied seaman, he at once fixed his glance.

"What!" he exclaimed, as he surveyed my father for a moment, and extended his open hand towards him, "can it be my old messmate, Jack Lobsowse, as we used to call you when you acted as cook of the *Lively*? How are you my jolly old chum?"

Although I clothe the worthy mate's address to my father in these expressions, I must acknowledge that they do not furnish an exact report of it, in words, although they may do so in spirit; for, to tell the truth, the salutation was quite in sailor-fashion, and though hearty and even affectionate, it contained almost as many oaths and imprecations as it did lawful expressions, and but for the good-natured and beaming smile which lit up his honest and open sun-burnt countenance, and the clashing thwack with which he hit, and the pump-handle shake with which he rugged at his *quondam* messmate's hand, one might have supposed that it was an enemy, and not a friend whom he had encountered, and that he was condemning his spiritual essence to perdition, instead of welcoming his bodily presence to his acquaintanceship again.



To this eccentric salute of his old messmate, my father replied by as hearty and generous a return on his part,

although with a prudent omission of strange oaths and imprecations. Not, perhaps, because he could not have embellished his ideas as glibly and smartly in a like way—for no doubt he had as complete a "fo'castle" education as most sailors pick up—but because he was evidently taken aback, by reflecting on the rank which his friend had attained to, as a mate, and from feeling that he now was not a common sailor like himself, but an officer. Perhaps, too, he felt subdued by knowing that he himself was about to become a claimant on his favour for a berth in the ship to which he belonged.

A few moments served to make this view of the matter palpable to me, for after the mate and he had got over their preliminary interchange of signals and salutes, and had asked and received answers to a hundred questions regarding former companions, friends, and messmates, and as to their own recent adventures and present occupations, my father told him plump that he was on his resources again, and in want of a ship, and that in the hope of getting one he was now here with his hammock and his kit ready to engage.

"Well," said the mate, "Isn't that unfortunate? Had I only seen you yesterday, I could have shipped you at once; but we are now filled up, and I have come on shore for two fellows that have got their advances, and who, I fear, are bemuddling themselves upon the head thereof."

This announcement, of course, was rather depressing to my poor father, whose countenance, which had just been recently beaming with hope, now became overclouded and lack-a-daisical with despair, which being observed by the mate, he tried to cheer him up with these words, "But look you, old messmate, it is quite possible that I may not get hold of one or other of the fellows in time, and if so, I will be free to ship you in his place; for, d'ye see, the owner of the ship is to be down with the despatches and the second mate, who is a relative of his own, in the course of an hour, and we will sail immediately thereafter, so as to join the convoy in good time, and which is mustering off Ailsa. Hold on, then, at this very place till I come back from overhauling some of their skulking haunts, and be ready to go off in the boat with me, in case I should lose them, which—in your ear—I will not be sorry to do, on your account!"

this piece of goodwill my father heartily thanked his

but to my surprise instead of joining him, in the
 that he would not catch them, he very candidly told him
 he expected he would, at once, be able to put his hand
 on, accompanying this piece of information with a nar-
 row of our mysterious encounter in the dark with the Bald
 at and the other rascal, and as to what had been
 betwixt the two, no doubt in regard to these very

honest communication seemed to make no small
 impression upon the mate, who again launched out with an
 story eulogy—if this rather anomalous term may be
 —upon my father's honesty and candour, telling him
 saw he was the same straight-forward and above-
 old salt he had all along known him to be, and
 it scorned to take advantage of a brother sailor, under
 us, no matter what was the temptation.

“However,” continued the mate, “this course is the best
 I, and in the long run will do you no harm, at least
 sorry if it does!”

the mate now proceeded towards the town, and after
 absent some time, returned, much to my mortification,
 with two half drunk sailors that he had gone in search
 of whom he ordered to take their places in the bow of
 the

Immediately after that he was joined by the owner of the ship,
 and driven down from Glasgow in his own gig, and
 to my delight, I recognised as the benevolent old gen-
 tleman that about a year before had on more occasions than
 one of service to me, Sissy, and my mother, when in
 and distressed circumstances, as already has been
 said.

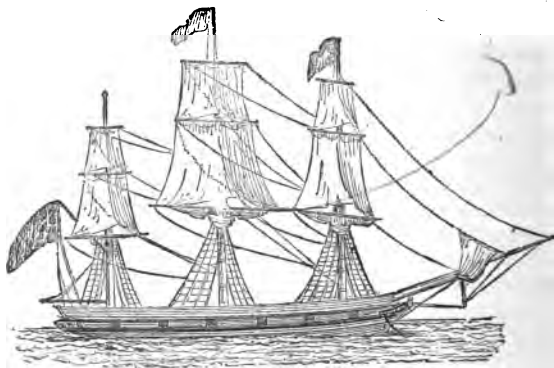
The old gentleman did not know me, the course of time,
 as my comparatively improved rig out, having changed
 appearance, not to say that had he been in the habit of
 sing every one he gave charity to, his acquaintanceship
 have been legion. Nor did I care that any recogni-
 tion of his part should have taken place, seeing that any ex-
 pression of our former meetings would have been rather
 untimely, had such been demanded by my father.

He passed into the boat, taking his seat upon the ensign,

which had been spread comfortably upon the stern sheets—as this part of a boat, in nautical parlance, is denominated—by way of a cushion; and I was expecting to see her shove off, leaving us behind, when the friendly voice of the mate came to our relief in these promising words:—

“Step on board, Jack, with your boy, and stow yourselves as far forward as you can; ’tis true that I have got the two lubbers I was in quest of, as you see, and now the full compliment of our crew is made up. Old Baggs, however (alluding to his respected owner), hasn’t brought down his nephew, whom we expected as second mate, so something may come out of that, as we shall see when we get on board.”

With joyful alacrity we now likewise took our seats in the boat, which immediately, under the strong pulling of the crew, who feathered their oars in regular man-of-war fashion, was flying towards the ship, which, as we neared her, loomed larger and larger in my inexperienced eyes, and at last appeared, as we came within hail of her, to be a perfect floating castle or leviathan, although, compared with ships of the present day, but a small craft after all.



We shortly afterwards came alongside of her, and scrambled up the side, and on getting on deck, there found a scene of busy and extraordinary life, the impression of which will never be erased from my mind. Sails were flapping aloft, sheets were rattling in the blocks, the heavy falls of the windlass were clanking as the sailors hung upon the handspikes, and

hove the cable short, while ropes dangled like snakes in the air, or occasionally lashed the deck, threatening damage to any who did not keep a sharp look-out.

In the midst of this enlivening scene the owner was welcomed on board by the captain—a well-knit, jolly-looking man—who stood at the top of the “accommodation ladder,” with cocked hat alee upon his head, and having a spy-glass in one hand and a speaking trumpet in the other, and presenting to my inexperienced ideas the very representative of what a sea commander should be.



With him and the mate the owner retired to the cabin, which was situated aft, and within the quarter-deck of the ship, while my father and myself were left to occupy ourselves as we best could; he, in waiting patiently with his “traps” till the result of the conference, which was evidently about to take place, should be known, and I in looking around, below, and above, at the strange and busy operations which were going on.

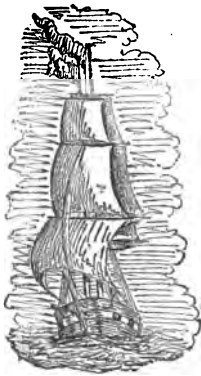
In a little while the mate emerged from the cabin with a pleasant smile on his countenance, and thus addressed my father :—“ All right, old boy ! I have managed the job for you, and in a better way even than I expected; for d’ye see, in consequence of my reporting how disinterestedly you put me in the way of recovering these two drunken lubbers, as well as myself vouching for your character and steadiness, the captain, at the solicitation of the owner, has promoted the boatswain to the office of second mate, and you are to get the latter’s vacant berth—you having acted as a boatswain before this—so you will not only get additional pay, though perhaps that may’nt be much, but a separate crib to yourself aft, along with the second mate, while, what is better, I will be enabled to hold social intercourse with you, as a companion in my watch, and as an officer.”

This unexpected and cheering piece of good news soon had its effect on my father; he retired for a moment to his cabin, and shortly thereafter appeared again on deck with his silver whistle, which he seemed to be quite up to the use of, and was soon amongst the men, whistling and ordering, as though it had all along been his occupation.

I was now taken by the kind-hearted mate to his own cabin, and there regaled with sea-delicacies, such as biscuit and butter, salt beef, and cheese, to my heart's content, and which my youthful and sharp-set teeth ground down and masticated, as though they had been going through the rollers of a flint-mill; and, in addition, the mate insisted on my stuffing my pockets with fine, brown, flinty biscuits, which I was not bashful in doing.

An hour or two was now consumed in further preliminaries, for it is a singular fact that, no matter how impatient a ship-captain may be to get away, and however complete and ready his vessel may be for such a desirable consummation, there is always some little incident occurring to consume the time, which, as it were, slips insidiously away, till one almost dreads that another day, at least, will be altogether lost. Little stores come on board at the last moment; petty delicacies are sent off by friends, as a compliment, or as a comfort, to the captain and officers; and even these friends themselves occasionally row off;—seeing that the ship still swings at her anchor—to have a parting glass of grog with the captain, and wish the good ship a successful voyage.

Still such things have an end, and in this case they had one, for at last the worthy owner, and some other friends who had been on board before us, emerged from the cabin just as the anchor was tripped, and the ship fell off, while rounding her massive side to a stiffish breeze that had sprung up, and which made the sails,—now in the act of being trimmed,—cease to flap against the lofty masts, while the spars creaked and the shrouds strained.



A shore boat now drew up at the bottom of the accommodation-ladder, at the lee-side, into which I was desired to quickly stow myself away, by my father, who, brushing a tear with his rough fist from his eyelids, which started at the moment, and desiring that I should kiss my mother, and particularly little Sissy, for him, when I got home, he wrung my hand, with a "God bless you, my boy!" and I descended as I was bidden.

Immediately afterwards the gentlemen likewise descended to the boat, amidst the man-of-war salute, called "piping the side," and which consisted in my father whistling shrilly and loudly with his whistle as boatswain, in his singular whir-whirr style, and which I heard the gentlemen declaring, after they had got into the boat, was done in first-rate man-of-war fashion. The "painter" was next let go, the captain lifted his hat in token of farewell, and we were now fairly off from the ship, which by this time had got completely under way, and was setting up a white spray at her bow.



I had, of course, never seen a ship under such circumstances before, and therefore was fully impressed with the magnificence and exhilarating effect of the scene I now beheld. Her sails, from the deck to the poles of the masts, bellied out; the masts, strong as they were, slightly bent to the pressure; the halyards became taut; the blocks creaked, and the ship herself laid over considerably as her speed gradually increased.

Three vociferous and heartfelt cheers at this juncture were given by the crew, which we faintly returned, while the ensign was dipped, and raised again, quickly, in compliment to the owner. Scarcely, indeed, had we had time to admire the ship's noble appearance than she had rounded a point called Kempuck, and ere we could almost look again, her hull was lost to our view, her topsails and streaming "bur-

gee"—the word being a corruption of "bird's-eye"—taining her name, being the last things pertaining to observable over the Point, as she sped on her course t Atlantic Ocean.



CHAPTER XV.

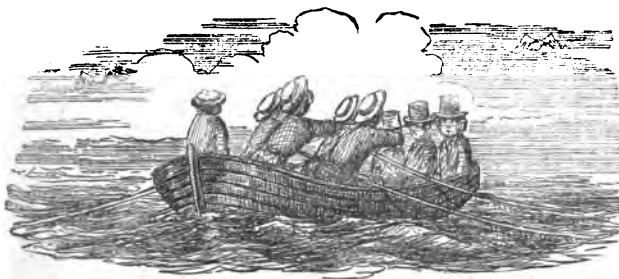
INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Seek not the smooth and pleasant path,
If thou the world would'st view;
The steep, and wild, and rugged road,
Tells wondrous tales, but true.

And simple youth learns more from these,
Than what is taught in schools;
So truthful is the adage, that
"Experience teaches fools!"

The Goosedubbs Poet.

WE now pulled rapidly, or at all events, as rapidly as could be done with a heavy "bum-boat," for the quay of Greenock again, while I sat in the bow of the crazy craft, blubbering amidst tears, and munching biscuits; perhaps, too, casting an



occasional glance backwards, like Lot's wife, towards the point round which the ship had vanished, with an unreasonable speculative idea that, possibly she might reappear, and

that I should see the old boatswain again. I likewise began to wonder when I might hear news regarding him.

Vain delusion! the best news of a ship, as sailors say, is no news at all—and evidently this was the maxim of the owner, for he sat in the stern of the boat, laughing and chatting with his friends alongside of him, and never deigning to cast a backward glance.

The worthy gentleman evidently felt happy and hearty, perhaps in consequence of knowing that his vessel was well filled up with a good cargo, and at a fair rate of freight, for, of course, no shipowner will ever allow that he gets too good a one. Perhaps, too, he had partaken freely of the hospitality of the cabin, which, to a landsman, is always a treat, and more prized than a like entertainment, even in greater profusion, is on shore.

He, indeed, seemed wonderfully good-natured and pleased with his friends, all of whom, on his getting to the landing-place, he invited to dine with him in the hotel, and which they evidently accepted with pleasure, promising to meet him there punctually at the hour named; after which arrangement they dispersed, possibly to attend to their several business avocations.

As for me—the poor and lone boy—alas! there was nobody to ask him to dinner, and consequently I was left to wander unhappily and solitarily on the streets of Greenock, not knowing well what to do, and wondering what course I should take, to get home again. I alternately munched the mate's brown biscuits, and wept; gazed into shop windows, and up long, dirty, narrow lanes; took a view of the steeple; hearkened to the street cries of the knife-grinders, periwinkle venders, and fishwives, thinking them odd; read innumerable signboards, and then wept again.

As I thus unmeaningly occupied myself, two gentlemen, seemingly struck by my unobtrusive woe, suddenly stopped, when one of them kindly asked me what was vexing me. To this query I replied that I had just parted with my father, who had gone to sea, and that I was now concerned as to getting to my home, which was distant even beyond the eastern outskirts of Glasgow.

"Poor little fellow," replied the benevolent gentleman, "we surely will manage to get you to Glasgow.

Follow me to my office, and I will instruct one of my skippers, who sails to-night with the flood-tide for Glasgow, to give you a passage on board his lighter, and in the meantime I will get you shelter from the streets.

"No, no, no! that won't do at all!" broke in the other gentleman, who appeared to be rather eccentric in his disposition, "you are just going to spoil the boy. Let him get to Glasgow as best he can, by his own wits and efforts—let him take the road and tramp it—a 'going foot is always gaining,' as the proverb says, and he'll pick up experience thereby that will benefit him afterwards; whereas, in your lighter, he'll only pick up what amounts to a reward to laziness!"



The eccentric gentleman here put his hand into his pocket and pulled out twopence in coppers. "Here, my little lad," he then continued, "take this and be off. It won't burden you, but at the same time it will keep you from want; and that is as much as the crown could do, which my rich friend here would give you, were I to allow him to do so."

He then took his friend by the arm and rather gratuitously as I thought, led him away, leaving me considerably mortified at the idea that, I should have lost a crown and a free passage home, through so much *quasi* charity, and philosophical philanthropy.

Ere I could collect my scattered thoughts, the gentlemen had vanished; so, after spending a few hours wandering about the town and docks, I was forced to make a virtue of necessity and adopt my eccentric benefactor's advice. I accordingly sought the prescribed path, which I did not experience much difficulty in finding, and was soon tramping along its mirey surface, the rain of the night before, having transformed what had lately been dust, into mud, rather of a consistent nature.

The sun, however, soon broke out, and what, from its drying warmth, and getting into a less moist locality, the road became much harder under foot, and more pleasant to walk upon. Indeed, before I had gone a couple of miles, the dust began to arise, and my feet in consequence to feel heated, and not a little tender.

I, however, jogged cheerfully along, passing some considerable villages, one of which at least, has since that period become a town, and in course of time felt myself rather fatigued. Blisters likewise had arisen on the upper part of my heels, to relieve which I was obliged to put one shoe into the shape of a slipper, and this causing an inequality in the action of my limbs, I began to limp, which forced me to pull a stake from a hedge to assist me, by way of a staff.



To add to my woes, the shades of evening rapidly drew on. The sun was far in the west, and though the afternoon was beautiful—the scene, as I looked back upon it, appearing a perfect blaze, as it were, of molten gold—I felt much unhappiness and even dread at the prospect of being obliged to proceed so painfully and so lonely.

At last the sun vanished, leaving only a grey twilight, while the woods on either side, excepting in some parts on the left, where the silver Clyde occasionally shone through, began to get deep and umbrageous, thus making the road darker than it naturally was. So much so was this the case, that I resolved if I came to a cottage or even a hut, I would beg a night's lodging, and be well contented if I could get that, in a straw loft, or any other outhouse.

No such desirable prospect, however, presented itself to my strained eyes, which indeed would have been much relieved with a hearty course of weeping, had I not felt that such was useless; and I began, with a misgiving heart to mount a hilly portion of the road, wondering what was to be my fate, and thinking how cruel it was, on the part of

the eccentric gentleman, to have forced me into this strait, when I otherwise might have been sailing up the Clyde, and which I now noticed, from some crafts that glided along its surface, was in full flow.

As I thus pondered I heard the sound of wheels behind me, and at last a smart gig, driven by a single occupant, came rapidly towards me.

I had a kind of prescient idea that the equipage would turn out to be that of the benevolent owner of the ship in which my father had sailed, as I calculated he was due about this time. My first idea was thereupon to set up a whine on his coming up to me, by way of an appeal to his feelings, a resource that in former days had been of service to me under like circumstances, but this I thought would be rather glaring. My next was of a more moderate and natural description. It was to "hirple" (that is halt) more than I had been even doing, accompanying the motion with a wistful look towards the occupant of the conveyance, and this I was the more completely enabled to do from the circumstance that, as he came alongside of me, he slackened the pace of his horse, so as to enable him to walk up the hill, which was now pretty tough and steep, even for a horse drawing a light gig.

My speculation, in this instance, was perfectly successful. As the gentleman came up and eyed me, I was gratified by hearing him exclaim, "Hilloa! my little friend, is that you whom I saw on board of my ship to-day, and whose father went off in her as boatswain?"

To this query, which of course confirmed my expectation that the charioteer would turn out to be the worthy gentleman, I readily and respectfully answered, explaining to him the plight I was in, but modestly, at the same time, indicating that I had no idea of getting further along, excepting through my own exertions, and which, perhaps, would not require to be so severe when I overcame the hill upon which I was now progressing.

"As to that," he replied, "I will soon set your mind at rest. Here," he continued, while bringing his horse to a stand-still, and unbuckling the leather apron of the gig, "jump up and take your seat beside me, and think yourself lucky in not being forestalled; for only a short distance back,

I was within an ace of offering a seat to another chap that was limping along, only I didn't like his appearance."

As he said this, we heard a shrill whistle some distance behind, which, a moment after, I thought was faintly answered by another whistle from before us, though a little to the right. The latter, the old gentleman did not seem to have recognised, for he only remarked regarding the first, that it was suspicious, and evidently an emanation from the fellow whom he had passed a short way back.

In regard to these whistlings, however, I had my own ideas, not having been reared in the Goosedubbs, amongst rogues and vagabonds, for nothing. I therefore, after I had taken my seat, felt uneasy, as the gentleman put his horse and gig in motion again, and proceeded towards the brow of the hill, which yet lay some distance before us, the tall trees on both sides of us, now rendering the scene almost dark.

We soon reached the height of the acclivity, and the



gentlemen had just tightened his rein, and applied his whip gently to his horse, so as to set it on a trot, when out there darted from the thicket a man, who seized the reins close to the horse's head with one hand, while with his other he presented a pistol, demanding, at the same time, that we

should remain quiet, or receive the contents thereof in our bodies.

In addition, we heard the clattering footsteps, and voice of the other scoundrel behind, as he came running up at a quick rate, encouraging the other to hold us fast, and in a moment more, he was at the other side of the horse.

This outrage had been so suddenly perpetrated that, the elderly gentleman was quite taken aback, and rendered confused, not to mention that the horse rearing at the same time, still farther discomposed him, thus giving the robbers every advantage over us, and rendering us an easy prey to their villany.

At this moment, however, I recognised, by means of the last remaining ray of twilight that still lingered over us, something that immediately shot like a flash of relief through me, keeping in mind, as I did, what had taken place in the quay shed the night before. It was the opaque outline, in a word, betwixt me and the sky, of a long beard, pertaining to the first-mentioned robber, and which, to my experienced eye, proclaimed the owner of it at the same time, while suggesting that I should try a little of my father's practice whereby to frighten him.

"Bald Billygoat! Bald Billygoat!" I accordingly exclaimed at the same moment, "beware what you are about, for the *beaks* are not far off." "Remember," I continued, as I observed that what I had said had taken him aback, though it had not induced him yet to let go his hold, "remember the fate of Barney Brogan and Roger the Rifler, and be warned in time!"

The latter hint was conclusive and effective. The Bald Billygoat immediately let go his hold, exclaiming, as he relinquished the reins, and, along with his companion in guilt, slunk towards the copse at the side of the road, "The devil is surely abroad, to baulk me thus so often! Pass on, then, as you list, but don't split on us, for we as yet have not touched a hair of your heads!"

As he said this, the horse started off at full gallop, down what had now become a declivity, and in a minute more we were beyond the range of the audacious villains' pistols, had they even been disposed to take a parting shot at us.

The horse continued its rapid pace, dragging us along in

the gig in rather a break-neck manner, till it had passed the foot of the incline and was about to ascend again, when it gradually lessened its speed and commenced to walk, though briskly.

During this period I had not said a word, beyond what has been mentioned, and indeed neither had the elderly gentleman, the reason evidently being that he had been stunned and amazed at the scene which had just passed.

At last he regained his equanimity, when he asked me, in the name of wonder, how I came to possess such a spell over footpads—whom, he presumed, I could scarcely have recognised amidst so much darkness, even if I had been acquainted with them before—as to make them relinquish their purpose, by merely using a few words which to him were unmeaning.

I confess this pertinent query on the part of the worthy gentleman, rather nonplussed me, as I felt that in explaining matters to him, I might go too far, and reveal what a degrading position I myself had once held in society, and which had made me acquainted with such characters as those who had attacked us. I however trusted to my wits, and in my narrative, managed matters so well, that I had not to refer to circumstances antecedent to those pertaining to my own and my father's rencounter with the Bald Billygoat in Lucky Breezer's tripe shop, and subsequently in the quay shed, where we bivouaced for the remainder of the night.

He laughed heartily at my narration of the adventure in the shed, explaining, as it did, how I had been so successful on the present occasion, in consequence of the Bald Billygoat being more susceptible of superstitious, than of physical dread, and to which circumstance he felt he was indebted for not being now robbed, and perhaps murdered. The benevolence of his heart, however, made him lament, at the same time, the fact that so much guilt should exist in the world, and caused him to "improve the opportunity," by impressing upon me many good advices and homilies, while we trotted along, as to how I should eschew bad company, and spirituous liquors, and attend to my moral and religious duties, saying my prayers regularly night and morning, and, above all, going to church twice on Sundays.

Excellent old gentleman! I knew he was perfectly sin-

cere, and likewise a firm believer in the maxims and advices which he had generously bestowed upon me; but young as I was at that time, and ignorant, and uneducated to boot, I could have told him, from dearly attained experience, that something more than praying and attending churches was necessary for the reformation of such characters as the Bald Billygoat, and of the population amongst whom he, and such as he, existed, and of whom he was only a part, and perhaps a good average sample.

I could have told him, that among the denizens of the low haunts of Scottish cities there was no want of missionaries; but that their prayers and preaching just went in at the one ear, and out at the other, and that really to reform such people, something that would elevate them in a social and physical way was required, and not ethics and homilies.

I however did not think proper to enter into any argument with the excellent man, but just let him prattle away, and which occupation seemed to give him much pleasure, interspersed, as his speech was, with an occasional address to his horse (within parenthesis), and an occasional touch of the whip, not by way of punishment to the noble animal, but just as a gentle hint that he should not forget his paces.

Thus we journeyed pleasantly along, stopping only at one place, where, upon the principle that "a merciful man is merciful to his beast," the good gentleman refreshed his horse with a little meal and water, and himself, notwithstanding his late protest against spirituous liquors, with a jorum of brandy and water, some of which he offered to me, but which I declined, thinking that the water was better without the brandy, and which sentiment he much commended.

At last we reached the southern precincts of Glasgow, and having crossed the Clyde, were soon trotting along the silent streets; for by this time it was pretty late, and the shops were shut, and the douce citizens were betaking themselves to their comfortable beds after the duties and fatigues of the day, if one might judge from the sudden eclipses of candles, which from time to time took place, in many elevated windows.

At the Cross, the gentleman stopped his gig, and as he had to go one way and I another, I was obliged to dismount and shift for myself, and which I was the more reconciled to do,

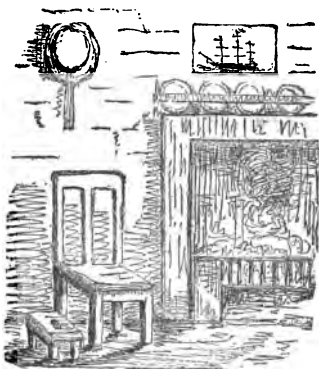
as my kind benefactor, in addition to what he had already done, rewarded me with a crown-piece, which he desired me to carry home to my mother.

I had still about a couple of miles to walk, and this distance, notwithstanding the prolonged rest which I had got in the gig, I found to be the most onerous and painful portion of my journey; for by this time the blisters on my heels had broken, and I felt my feet swollen, and altogether cut up and incapable, which made me wonder how I would have fared had I not fallen in with the old gentleman at so seasonable a moment.

It was not till some time after midnight that I arrived at my mother's dwelling, and it was then even with difficulty that I obtained admittance, for she and Sissy had gone to bed, not expecting me till next day. I however, after some rapping at the door, obtained entrance and a kind welcome, and after refreshing myself with some nice sweet milk and bread, that kind little Sissy had insisted should be kept for me on the chance of my arriving, and towards the augmentation of which, the poor thing had stinted her own self—going supperless to bed in consequence—I was glad to seek my humble couch, before falling asleep in which, I could not help acknowledging to myself that, the eccentric gentleman in Greenock, who had made me take the road, was right after all, in his wholesome though severe principles, for not only was I as rich as though I had gone by the river, with his friend's crown in my pocket, but I had arrived sooner at my destination, making a good friend of the elderly gentleman, who, if I fell in with him, might be of service to me afterwards, and, moreover, picking up much useful experience, as had been prognosticated.

The next day was to me, and indeed to us all, rather a melancholy one; for, after communicating to my mother and Sissy my narrative of the events that had happened since I had left, and hearing in turn regarding what had happened with them, and which amounted to little or nothing, we began to feel the want of the poor old sailor, whose seat beside the ingle now remained vacant, but which, in our mind's eye, we saw tenanted by him who was now rolling in the broad Atlantic ocean, and likewise probably, in *his* fancy, occupying it again.

And so time passed from day to day, and from week to week, and from month to month, with no change in our uneventful and simple lives, excepting that I attended Dominie Lickladdie's school to exhaust a quarter's teaching, which had been paid for in advance by my father before he left, taking Sissy along with me, whose quarter had likewise been paid for by him, and which, I believe, formed the bulk of all the schooling that the poor thing ever got in her life, at all events as a child, whatever she may have obtained afterwards, as a grown-up person.



Sissy, however, made good progress during the short period she was at school, assisted as she was by me in the evenings at the fireside, and by our aunt, whom she visited regularly for the purpose, and who was a bit of a scholar, and a good reader of the Bible, and in consequence, notwithstanding the meagreness of her education, she learned to read the most difficult books. As for myself, I could read, write, repeat the multiplication table, add, subtract, and calculate by the rule of three; while, at the same time, I understood to some extent the principles of bookkeeping, by double and single entry, from watching the progress of some more advanced scholars, who were being initiated in that science by Dominie Lickladdie, at the cost of a higher fee, and who kindly lent me, now and then, their manuscripts, and explained the system to me.

The fact is, I was greedy of such acquirements, knowing the value of them, and therefore picking them up with a relish that perhaps would not have existed within me had I been—like some other pupils attending the school—the son of a rich, or at all events a comparatively rich man. I therefore distanced all my competitors, and gave great satisfaction to the dominie, who felt that my progress did him credit, and who therefore hinted, when the quarter was out, and he

found that he would not be paid for any more, that I might be continued gratuitously, if I acted at the same time, as his assistant, to the younger scholars.

This arrangement would have suited me perfectly well, and, so far as I was concerned, I was quite willing to have entered into it; but alas! circumstances had occurred to render my acceptance of it out of the question; and, indeed, they were such as altered not only my own prospects of getting on in life, but those of the whole of our little family.

To come to the point at once, we learned from a paragraph in a newspaper, which had been sent to us through the post by some friend, and was no doubt authentic, for it was amongst the shipping news thereof, that the ship in which my father had sailed some months before, had been fallen in with by another vessel, after the partial subsidence of an awful gale of wind, in a waterlogged and sinking state, and abandoned by her crew, in some part of the Atlantic Ocean, and that shortly after being discovered, she had sunk; that it was supposed, from there being no boats on board of her, that she had been some time deserted, and that the crew had consequently taken to them, and had either perished afterwards, or, as was sincerely to be hoped, been rescued by some other vessel.

This news, of course, was a severe blow to us, and completely prostrated all our energies, leaving us in most painful doubt regarding him who was so dear to us, and likewise so necessary towards our maintenance, for along with the melancholy announcement, we found that all further advances on account of his pay were, according to the articles of agreement, stopped by the agents in Greenock, who, up to this period, had regularly remitted us those little pittances, which, added to the occasional and irregular trifles picked up by my mother as a washerwoman, had enabled us, accompanied by the exercise of the strictest economy, if not niggardliness, to maintain existence.

It is true that we were still enabled to cling to the hope that my father's life had been spared, the paragraph which had furnished the information of the vessel's wreck, permitting us to maintain this meagre bit of consolation; and, consequently, we looked forward from day to day, with the most intense interest, for a letter from the old sailor, which would

our anxiety; but alas! it came not. We heard of mails arriving—we heard of other people getting news from *their* friends on the other side of the Atlantic, even from the Antipodes; but not a line came to us, and hope deferred maketh the heart sick," so our hearts ached, and we wept and ached, and at last we were accustomed to our loneliness, which indeed was a great one.

Instead of continuing to mope under such circumstances, even with my little Lickladdie's gratification offer, it was necessary that I should work; now that was best to do, for one was rather a stranger to us. To go to



work at my time of life would have been to get only as much as barely would sustain myself, and besides I had a great ambition, and I yearned to employ myself at something that would engage my educational acquirements. I thought that if I once got a place where I could exercise these, I should not fail to get on; for, in addition to having considerable confidence in my own energies, I took pleasure in my own action, and never was so happy as when well employed. At other times boys considered a task or a drudge. At the time, I liked a little play, and found that, all the sweeter were my labours, particularly if these had been of an intellectual description. I therefore resolved to aim at occupation for myself—if possible, a draper's, or some such respectable tradesman's, and failing that, in a grocer's or provisioner's at least,—and for this purpose I proposed to visit my aunt the very next day.

For poor Sissy, it was settled that she should go to a spinning-mill close by, the only place where occupation for such tender years as hers, at this period, could be got;

my mother resolved to increase her exertions still by getting work out, and failing that, in conjunction with my aunt, by taking in washing and dressing at home,

there being for the purpose, luckily, some slight accommodation, in the shape of an outhouse at the rear of our humble dwelling, capable of containing tubs and other implements, connected with such a sloppy occupation.



CHAPTER XVI.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGEREELS.

'Tis said, an honest man engaged
In struggling against odds,
Is quite a feast for Jupiter,
And all the heathen gods.

It may be so, and if it is,
What then must be their joy
To see the struggler, not a man,
But a poor and starving boy?

The Goosedubbs Poet.

not trifle away much time, after I had formed the notion of seeking employment, but went boldly to work, leaguering, on my way to the city, the very first shop-keeper that hung out his sign beyond our village, and whose shop looked respectable.

And this, 'tis true, only by way of experiment, being under rather too confident impression, that I could not fail one way or other, to be successful; and, therefore, in thus leaguering, as I considered it to be, I was not resolved to stop, even should I get an offer, but to discover thereby, ere long, what was about my value in the eyes of emulous buyers.

Soon, however, was obliged to come down a peg in my self-estimation of myself; for the old huckster to whom I

first paid my addresses, and who sat solemnly, like a judge,



behind his counter, with a worsted wig on his head, and a pair of rusty iron-cased spectacles on his beak, reading a well-thumbed and befouled newspaper, dated at least a week before, merely, in answer to my query, "Do you require a boy?" lifted his eyes from off the grimy page on which they had been fixed, and said, "Cut!" meaning, in other words, "Be off!" a hint which I perfectly understood, and

accordingly acted up to, although I felt somewhat nonplussed, at his cynical abruptness, or rather rudeness.

I, however, passed on, and soon found out that my friend of the worsted wig was not by any means the exceptional barbarian I had supposed him to be; for in the very next shop, which was that of a tobacconist,—and where the man of snuff and quids appeared in brown and bushy hair, not unlike a portion of his own "returns," as that quality of cut tobacco was labelled in his window,—I got no answer at all, but merely a sign, which he effected by motioning his thumb vulgarly towards his shoulder, and which I knew to indicate, likewise, "Be off!"

I now began to feel rather down-hearted and chap-fallen, which sensation was accompanied with a desire to return home, and unbosom my disappointment to my mother and Sissy; but when I reflected that they could do nothing but join me in lamentations and weeping, and that they had their own difficulties to encounter as well as myself, I picked up further pluck, and proceeded on what was now becoming a rather repulsive ordeal.

One shopkeeper, to my query, would merely growl out a gruff and emphatic "No!" Another would tell me that he had had enough of boys, and would have no more to do with them; while a third would jeeringly and satirically inform me that he already had a boy, whom he would sell cheap.

I was really beginning to think that boys were articles in the creation, of no use or value at all—a drug in the market of employment—something that might be dispensed with altogether, and the world be all the richer for the subtraction,—when I arrived at a portion of the suburban street leading to the city, where there were no shops at all, and actually found the circumstance a relief.

I now began to envy every boy that I observed engaged in employment. This one carrying a parcel, was useful to his kind; that one driving a donkey coal-cart looked business like; while even a little supple fellow, dressed fantastically, and sparsely, for he was half naked, and who danced and tumbled to the rude music of a man who played on a pandean pipe and beat a drum, seemed to be something. I alone was out of place—I was nothing!

I, however, jogged along, and soon came within the precincts of the city itself, where the population was denser, and the shops larger, and more brilliant, and filled with richer stocks than those from which I had received so many rude repulses.

The shops, indeed, looked so magnificent, comparatively, with those I have alluded to, that I felt awed when I contemplated them as places to seek employment in, and my energies became almost paralysed when I essayed to enter one for the purpose of offering my services.

I screwed my courage to the sticking point, however, and walking up to what I took to be the head-shopkeeper, I put my stereotyped question; when, to my surprise, instead of being repulsed as I expected, and that too with severity in keeping with the greater importance of the place, he referred me to his master, who sat at a desk within a wooden partition in the interior of the shop.



Misgivingly I approached the spot, when I found it tenanted by an elderly man, who, when I had asked him if he wanted a boy, benevolently replied—at all events I considered it so—that he did not at present, but that he might do so in the course of a short time.

He further gratified me by questioning me as to my qualifications, which, after I had enumerated them, induced him to write down a few memoranda connected therewith, when, by way of adieu, he informed me that I might call again in a month or six weeks.

This act of condescension on the part of the shopkeeper was certainly nothing to my advantage, for a moment's reflection might have shown to me that, even could I have waited a month or six weeks, I would, at the end of that period, just have received a like answer; but still, it was so different to what I had experienced in my first application, that, strange though it may appear, it put me in spirits, and raised my flagging hopes. I felt as if the tide of misfortune had reached low-water mark, and was about to turn in my favour.

If that was the case, it stood at the minimum a considerable time, for, though I tried twenty or thirty shops afterwards, not one of them required a boy.

I had now reached the heart of the city, and was beginning to feel rather tired and hungry, and instead of looking to those shops where I might get employment, I felt inclined to contemplate the windows of such as attracted more the animal than the moral qualities. I viewed, with watering mouth, the cold-beef shops, and thought nothing looked so tempting as the broken steak pies, and sliced roasts, and ruddy rounds. Angular pieces of fresh Dunlop cheese, too, appeared to be delicious; and even "penny rumpies," in bakers' windows, were most inviting, particularly as the steam they emitted, showed that they had just come from the oven.



What almost, however, upset me completely, was the view

that revealed itself to my tantalised eyes, on coming opposite a confectioner and pastry cook's window. It was, in my estimation, a feast spread out for the gods themselves—tarts, cheese-cakes, buns, sweeties—everything, in short, from a pie to a peppermint drop. What surprised me most, connected with this establishment, was the circumstance, that on flattening my nose on the glass, so as to see the inside of the shop, I observed the presiding genius thereof, in the shape of a Quaker, with his broad-brimmed hat on his head, sitting calmly reading, instead of eating away, with no end of appetite, and rewarding himself with the delightful cates and condiments that were spread around him. I waited in vain for him to begin; he only took a pinch of snuff, turned over a leaf of his paper, and read again.



How I felt, under these circumstances, the want of money, it is impossible to describe. Had I had thousands, I thought I could have spent every stiver of it in that shop, and never have been done consuming its sweets. Alas! however, I had not a single farthing in my pocket, and therefore I could only devour with my eyes, what was denied to my mouth.

A lucky idea at this moment suggested itself to me. "Perhaps," I said to myself, "if I ask this old Quaker for a place, I may come off with a cheese-cake." And before I had given myself time to consider the propriety or impropriety of the step, I found myself standing before his counter, and putting the question to him.

"Do I require a boy?" he answered, while darting a penetrating glance at me from under his broad brim. "Wherefore, and with what meaning, dost thou ask me the question?"

"To run messages," I replied, "to carry parcels, or to keep the shop in your absence."

"Friend," said the Quaker, to this bold proposal, "I have no messages to be run, I have no parcels to be carried, and as to keeping the shop in my absence, I do fear that I

should have but a sorry account of it on my return; for thou lookest to be a healthy covey—as the saying is—and I would marvel not if all the pastry in my shop and the confectionaries to boot would fail to *starve*—as the saying further is—the youthful appetite thou seemest to possess!”

I was turning away as the stern quaker uttered these words, feeling in my mind that my speculation, so far as regarded him, was a failure, when he called me back, while a more pleasing expression seemed to animate his countenance, and at the same time a humorous twinkle shot from his grey eye. “Stay a moment,” he exclaimed, “thou art evidently disappointed, and I like the way thou essayest to be off without importuning me, therefore take these moulded tarts, and may they be a consolation to thee in thine adversity.”

As the worthy quaker said this, he opened a low drawer at the back of his counter, and taking therefrom a couple of twopenny tarts, he placed them in my hand which I eagerly held out to him, and having resumed his seat and his paper, as I heartfully thanked him, I walked out of his door.

Kind old Qbediah! He knew not, nor cared to think, how much that simple act had touched my heart, and stamped that old brown, broad-brimmed hat, and that little tart shop indelibly in my memory and gratitude. Many a time I visited the latter afterwards, and many a sum I spent in it under very different circumstances from those which first introduced me to it; and even to this day, though occupied for a different purpose, and tenanted by others who probably know not who, or what was its former occupant, on whom the turf has now lain many a day, I never pass it without recalling the scene which I have now endeavoured to describe, kindly to my mind.

I now joyfully, with the tarts in my hand, sought a quiet corner, removed from all shops, and where few passers-by were present, and there I gormandised the stale tarts that the good Quaker had bestowed upon me. They may have been a little moulded, as he hinted, but if so, the circumstance made little difference to me, for down my gullet they went with a relish that I do not remember fresher and even dearer sweets ever to have possessed since.

My feast being finished, I now began to think of returning homewards; for I had by this time given up all hopes of obtain-

ing employment in the way I had proposed to myself, and which state of matters I contemplated with a heavy heart indeed (particularly as the tarts were done); for to go back under such circumstances was to go to starve, and, along with that, to make others starve.

As I thus paced unhappily along, I chanced to lift my eyes towards the window of some business chambers, where, stuck upon it with a couple of wafers, I perceived a stripe of paper, on which was written the attractive words (to me), "A Boy Wanted."

It was the work of a moment for me to lift the latch of the door and walk in, when I stood before a gentleman, whose age might be betwixt twenty-five and thirty, and who sat at a desk, whereon lay books, upon which he was engaged writing, and to him I made application, in virtue of the notice I had seen affixed to the window.

"I am afraid you are too late," he replied carelessly; "another boy called only an hour ago, about the place, and the 'Governor' has gone out to make inquiries regarding him, and if these are satisfactory, he will be engaged."

I felt rather mortified at this announcement, though I could not help considering it in keeping with my former luck, which seemed to lead to uniform disappointment. I, however, sat down in a corner, according to an invitation given to me by the gentleman, and there I passed a very uneasy quarter of an hour, thinking how galling it would be if I lost this chance, simply by being half-an-hour too late in making the application, particularly as the situation was evidently far superior to any I had aimed at, in the shops from which I had so unceremoniously been repulsed, while feeling, at the same time, what a triumph it would be over the huxters, and tobacconists, and tailors, if I now succeeded.

At last "the Governor" came, whose first words to the gentleman who sat at the desk were much to my relief, to the effect that the boy wouldn't suit, and that they must find another.

"Well, then," replied the gentleman, while pointing towards me with the feathery end of his quill, "perhaps that one will? He just came in as you departed: and he looks something like the thing."

As he said this, "the Governor" turned round to

look at me, when, to my amazement, I discovered in him the same benevolent person who had so often been of service to me before, and in whose vessel my unfortunate father had sailed as boatswain, not forgetting that afterwards he had brought me the greater part of the way home from Greenock, in his gig.



CHAPTER XVII

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Stubborn, though trite, the proverb is,—
With truth demonstrative,—
That half the world knows not, nor cares
How t'other half doth live.

To him of philanthropic soul,
Sad is the revelation ;
Although,—on thinking,—he obtains
This source of consolation:

That, what to one, a trifle is—
Unable to support one—
Unto another, is a great
And independent fortune !

The Goosedubbs Poet.

“AH !” exclaimed my sexagenarian friend, as he cast his benevolent eyes upon me, “if I mistake not, you and I are old acquaintances. You are my old companion in the gig, and am I not indebted to you for my escape from robbers, on the road from Greenock to this, some considerable time ago ?”

To this flattering query I stammered out that I was the boy alluded to, but that I was more indebted to him than he to me, inasmuch as that, through his intercession, my father obtained a berth in his ship as boatswain, when he was at the last extremity, and had no prospect of otherwise gaining employment.

As I faltered out this compliment to my benefactor, the remembrance of the fate of my poor father occurred vividly to my mind, while at the same time the tears rushed into my eyes, a circumstance which I suspect did more good to me, in the estimation of the gentleman, than the finest speech

could have effected, even had I been able to make it, as an expression of the gratitude I really felt towards him.

"Alas!" he answered, "I fear that that appointment has been the cause of your father's death, for never a word have we heard of the unfortunate ship's crew, since the announcement of her foundering, and we therefore fear they have all found a watery grave."

"However," he continued, "that cannot be helped now. What is done cannot be undone; and it is impious in us to do anything but resign ourselves to the decrees of a higher Power, who ordereth everything for the best."

The excellent gentleman then patted me on the head, and



questioned me as to my attainments and qualifications for the situation which was vacant in his office. He explained that it was more a practical, than an intellectual berth, and that the duties connected with it were, principally to take off the outside window-shutters in the morning, and put them on at night; to sweep out the office floor, and dust down the desks, and other furniture; to run messages, and take letters to, and from the Post-Office; to carry parcels, and deliver circulars; to put

on fires, and scrape the snow from the pavement in front of the office in winter, and to sweep it free from dust in summer; and on the whole to make myself generally useful!

He stated, further, that although the assistant he wanted for the performance of these services would not be required to labour much with the mind, it would be no objection if he could write a little, and use figures. It would be a drawback, however, if he meddled much with the office quills, and dabbled with the ink, a propensity, on the part of other boys, which he had been obliged to remonstrate against, and, indeed, punish, on more than one occasion, but which he hoped he would not require to do with me.

He then announced to me that the payment, or, as I dignifiedly soon learned to term it, salary, for such services

had, to former boys, been half-a-crown a-week; but, in consideration that I had lost my father in his service, and that my mother was a poor and industrious woman, he would augment the same, to three shillings a-week, which he hoped would induce me to be extra attentive, civil, and industrious.

I readily assented to these conditions; indeed, I would have been glad to have accepted much less favourable ones, humbled, disappointed, and subdued, as I had been, in my expectations, before I luckily stumbled upon his establishment, by the severe but wholesome ordeal that I had previously come through, amongst the shopkeepers.

He thereupon bestowed upon me half-a-crown, as "arles,"—as such an offering, under the circumstances, is called in Scotland—and dismissed me, with instructions to commence work on the following Monday morning, for which purpose I was to call at his private residence, situated at a little distance, as early as eight o'clock, for the keys, and to have the office all ready for business by nine, and which rule was to be continued on every day afterwards, excepting Sundays.

Impressed with the profoundest gratitude towards my new employer, and elevated at the same time with no small degree of pride at the success of my application, I now left the office and proceeded homewards again, while almost unable to refrain, in my joy, from committing some antics. I felt very much inclined to throw up my cap in the air and to shout out hurrah! and I do believe that but for the presence of the passers-by, I would have actually turned a somersault, or, as the expression in Scotland is, "tummel'd the wul'-cat" (*Anglice*, tumbled in the style of a wild cat), or climbed up a lamp-post, and dropped down again, or done something that was very unmeaning and very absurd.

I, however, managed to subdue the liveliness of my movements, although I could not do that of my thoughts and fancy. Indeed, so strong were the latter, that I commenced to build no end of castles in the air, and, like



the clown with the eggs, to multiply and remultiply the chances of the prospect, that lay before me, to such an extent, that soon all my eggs became chickens, which again laid eggs, that had at least two yolks each!

In this felicitous state I walked along, and could see no one so happy as myself. All were my inferiors; and I do believe that, had I met my new master himself, I could have afforded to pity his less elevated position, in my estimation. My ambitious fancy was excited also; and, before I had got well out of sight of his office, I had, in my mind's eye, passed from being his drudge to being his clerk; and from that, to being his bookkeeper and manager; and again from that, to being his partner and equal.

Of course, such precocious ambition may be considered very absurd, and, in the minds of jealous and haughty people, very contemptible; but what of that, if such leads to results, beneficial to the possessor of it, and stimulates him on and on, till he becomes the acquirer, in reality, of what he holds only in theory? It is said of Napoleon's conscripts that each carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack, yet nobody ever ridiculed and laughed at them in consequence. Indeed, the idea was considered honourable to them, and, instead of being scouted, it was encouraged.

If such ambition, then, be proper in the military tadpole, why should it be the reverse, in the commercial one? For doth not commerce require recruits for its armies as well as war, and are not the victories of the former at least as important to nations, as those of the latter?

Whatever may be thought of such ultra self-respect, however, I have this excuse for having nurtured it, that it is an element peculiarly possessive of the Scottish mind; and, from this fact, I can trace the circumstance that, go to what corner of the globe you like, you will there scarcely ever see "*Maister Alexander*" occupying a menial situation. On the contrary, the chances are, that you will generally find him master, or at all events in the way of becoming master. It may be that in the latter expectant position, he may conduct himself humbly; but if so, it is on the principle that "He who humbleth himself shall be exalted!"

This peculiar idiocracy is perhaps more observable in the

man abroad, than in the Scotsman at home; and no
 ler; for, under the former circumstance, Sandy has
 field for his propensity, seeing that those he comes
 agst are, comparably with him, simple and facile; and,
 equently, his motto, like that of the great Roman,
 t be, "*veni, vidi, vice*," whereas, under the latter, he
 to contend in the pursuit for mastery, with his own
 ; and when Scot meets Scot then comes the tug of
 ulation.

ie propensity, however, may be seen at home as well as
 ad, and by those who may even reckon themselves no
 observers. I myself, without alluding to my own in-
 lual case, have witnessed the phenomenon a hundred
 s. I have, for instance, on making a commercial call at
 office of some neighbouring man of business, noticed that

ad just got a new boy—it might
shirpit, ill-shaped, clumsy, ugly
 die:" very civil, no doubt, in his
 way, and in his new position, but
 green and very awkward withal.
 few months, I have observed the
 got, free from his chrysalis state;
 in as many more, I have observed
 with comparatively rich toggery,
 decidedly improved manners, fast
 oaching the winged state of the
 rfly, which, if it did not induce
 to fly away, to where I would have
 sight of him, would soon develope



adult insect in the most wonderful degree; for, without
 g myself open to the charge of being a romancer, I
 t aver, without fear of contradiction, that I have seen
 very entomological individual, successively become the
 dential adviser of his master,—the master of his master,
 d ultimately, the entire master. Then, undergoing a
 change, I have seen him rise in the world, build a
 e, marry a wife,—perhaps one who was sipping her tea
 a silver spoon, in a West-end mansion, whilst he was
 ng his "*parritch*," with a horn one, in a Gallowgate
 t,—bring up a genteel family, attain municipal honours,
 then retire with a fortune, or perhaps die, or fail, and

thus go down for ever—it's all one how, in Glasgow—in the vortex of an ordinary mortality cycle, or that of a sweeping commercial crisis; and all this take place in the course of a decade, or a couple at most!

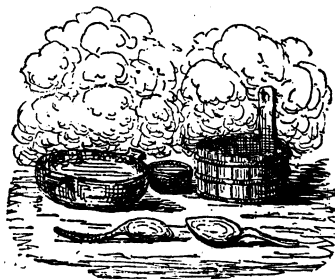
There are many instances, such as the foregoing, on record, connected with the careers of Scottish boys, and perhaps there may be similar instances known connected with those of English, and particularly London boys. The case of Whittington, indeed, is one, and likely there have been scores of Whittingtons. But what in London may be called the exception, is, in Scottish commercial towns, invariably the rule. In the latter there is no such thing, in commercial life, as the professed drudge, or hack, or even clerk, whose aim is to carry on, in the same undeviating career, during the course of a lifetime, and who looks up to an employer, as a dog does to a master. On the other hand, there are thousands, nay myriads, in London, who have no other idea than to be employed as menials, and to remain menials, throughout life, even though highly paid. That such antagonistic phenomena should exist connected with the respective commercial economics of the two great metropolitan cities of England and Scotland, is a singular fact, but still it is a fact!

To our tale however. I passed through the city homewards, at a much more rapid pace than I had gone the opposite way, in the morning; and on reaching my mother's humble dwelling found her and Sissy, as well as my aunt, assembled round the little fire, or ingle, as they liked to call it, talking about the state of our affairs, and the discouraging prospects before us.

Of course, I did not delay telling them all about my efforts, and of my ultimate success, expecting great commendation for the one, and congratulation for the other. These, no doubt, were awarded to me, but I confess I felt a little disappointed when I found that they did not put such a high value upon the latter as I did myself, for instead of estimating the situation I had acquired, or rather the "salary" attached to it, as a perfect sufficiency to maintain the whole family in independence and comfort, in keeping with my castle-building ideas; they demonstrated, by a very short process of calculation, in which the price of oatmeal formed

a principal element, that it was barely large enough to provide my own food, let alone clothing and other outfitting, which the respectability of the employment I had undertaken, and the standing of my employer, imperatively demanded, particularly if it was to be expected that I should make any impression on the latter which would lead to advancement.

Nevertheless, it was considered something; and what with even the still more miserable remuneration that poor Sissy was to receive at the mill—with small prospect of advancement in her case—and my mother's occasional employment as a washerwoman, we, upon the whole, were induced to hope that we would be enabled to maintain ourselves, or, as the expression used was, "keep soul and body together!"



CHAPTER XVIII.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

From less to more, the insect grows,
The butterfly, from the grub;
The merchant, from the starving boy,
The great man, from the scrub!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

ON the morning of the Monday succeeding the important day of the engagement which I had entered into with my new employer, and whose name I may mention was Samuel Silvertop, Esq.—of the firm of Samuel Silvertop and Company, Merchants, Puncheon Lane, Glasgow—exactly as the town bells were tolling eight o'clock, I duly sounded, with official vehemence, the knocker of the said Mr. Silvertop's door, which



being opened, I received, after explaining who I was, a hearty scold from his "servant lass"—although the word lass was scarcely applicable to her, she being evidently on the sinister side of fifty, and withal, demure looking, and violent in her language—for knocking so loud.

Bell, however, as I learned afterwards to call her, gave me the office keys, when I proceeded there, and immediately commenced work, by not only going through the curricu-

lum of duties that had been laid down to me by my respected master—from the removal of the outside window shutters to the dusting of the desks—but in addition, I took a pail and worsted clout, which I found in a press, and having filled the

former, with water from a neighbouring well, I duly washed the office floor, I then whitened the hearth with some pipe-clay that I likewise found in the press, and finally, brushed and blacklead the grate, and rubbed up the chairs and other articles of furniture round about, till they shone again. I then took my position on a high stool at an inward desk, and there awaited the coming of Mr. Silvertop, and his right hand man, Mr. Bracepiece (the gentleman whom I had first seen when I made application at the office for the situation I had now entered upon), who were not long of making their appearance.



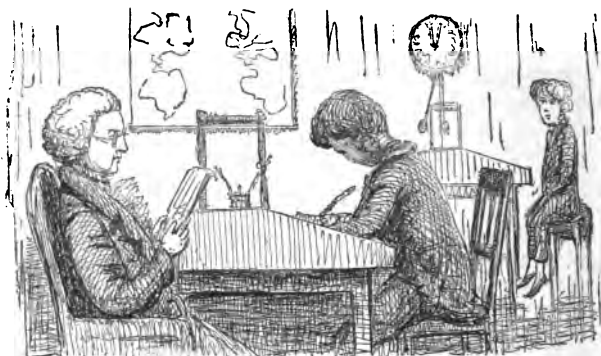
"A-ha!" exclaimed Mr. Silvertop, as he entered the office, and gazed around at the preparations I had made, "this indeed looks well for a beginning; our new boy promises not to belie the estimation I have formed of him!"

"New besoms sweep clean," replied Mr. Bracepiece, "at least I have generally found such to be the case. We'll see, if he will continue a month or even a week at this work, and then I'll express my opinion as to his merits."

The gentlemen then commenced to break open the seals of several letters which they found in the letter-box, and to read these with considerable interest, after which, they respectively took to what seemed to have been their ordinary avocations in the office, Mr. Silvertop occupying himself with a newspaper that had been left by a news-boy, and into the mysteries of which he seemed to plunge with no inconsiderable relish, and Mr. Bracepiece commencing to write in a huge ledger which he took from an iron safe, and which ledger had brass clasps, and a padlock, making it look something altogether mysterious and formidable.

As for myself, I now felt very much like a fish out of the water, although in consideration that I sat perched on the top of the high stool already mentioned, I perhaps, instead of a fish, looked rather like a fowl—that is a weather-cock, on

the summit of a steeple, and probably Mr. Bracepiece thought



so too, for he occasionally darted a humorous glance at me, as if he wondered what I could be thinking about.

At last Mr. Silvertop cast aside the newspaper, having probably got through its contents, and rising from his seat, stated to Mr. Bracepiece that he would "take a turn the length of the coffee-room." In reply to this Mr. Bracepiece said nothing, but as his superior left the office, he took the newspaper and commenced to read.

This I considered rather dry work, and I could not help contrasting it, in my mind, with the more interesting occupation I had formerly had, at the same time of day, in attending school, and playing with my contemporaries. Nor was the monotony that I now experienced in the least degree lessened by the ticking of a German clock that hung against the wall, the pendulum of which vibrated with a regularity that made me perfectly miserable.

Mr. Bracepiece likewise, in his turn, exhausted the newspaper, and also rising, left the office, when I, in imitation of my betters, now assumed the paper, and commenced to scan its contents, which, to say the truth, I did not find at all interesting. It contained, in the first place, a number of advertisements, not one of which I could persuade myself was worth the least notice, although both Mr. Silvertop and Mr. Bracepiece had devoted more attention to the page containing these, than to any other part of the paper. It further contained long columns of market quotations, and of prices-

current, and, in addition, some extracts from the *London Gazette* regarding a war going on, on the Continent, in which the King's troops were engaged, but as to which war, I had never heard, far less read, a word until this moment, although I vividly recollected the pleasure and excitement I had experienced some weeks before, in witnessing a grand illumination, and display of fireworks, which took place in honour of a great battle that had been fought, and victory obtained, but the merits of which had never been explained to me. It had been sufficient for me, as indeed it was to most of the population who witnessed the display, that on that occasion much powder had been burned, accompanied with villanous smells therefrom, and many guns and pistols had been fired off, some of which had burst and taken off the fingers of one laddie, and killed outright another—the former of said laddies having previously robbed his mother of sixpence, with which he had bought the powder, that did the damage.

I soon got through the newspaper, not caring to read the leaders, nor several long debates in Parliament, or the names of a great many noblemen and gentlemen that had attended a King's levee in London—all of which it contained; so I laid the paper down again on the spot from whence I had lifted it, and once more took my place on the high stool, there to await the return of my masters, and to endure the ticking of the everlasting clock.

Mr. Bracepiece shortly after this made his appearance; but when he beheld me perched in the same spot, and looking as unmeaning as before, he was evidently distressed. "Here," he said, as he placed a penny on the desk before me, "take that, and go and buy a roll for yourself, for you must be hungry, and by the time you come back, I shall have some work for you."

I accordingly lifted the penny and proceeded outwards, when, on coming to a baker's shop, I was not long dilatory in purchasing the roll, nor in eating it, after which, fearing that I might be blamed if I staid away too long, I immediately returned to the office.

This excessive dutifulness, however, I might have spared myself, for, on entering the office, Mr. Bracepiece exclaimed, "confound you, are you back already?" and otherwise indicated that he was rather more annoyed, than delighted, with my extreme attention.

Of course, I had not sense, nor experience, sufficient to descry that I was a bore, so I clambered to my perch again, and there sat staring at Mr. Bracepiece, who, as he wrote, could not help smiling good naturedly at me notwithstanding.

The work he had, in the interim, prepared for me was simply the delivery of a couple of notes, and which he now despatched me with, evidently glad to get me out of the office on any pretence, but which piece of good intention I ingenuously baulked by running all the way, and after delivering them, by returning as quickly, and out of breath, and that too, as he expressed himself when relating the circumstance to Mr. Silvertop, who in the meantime had come back to the office "in the course of no time at all."



And thus passed the first day of my service in the employment of Samuel Silvertop and Company. It had been one of tedium to me, and evidently of no great pleasure, so far as I was concerned, to the firm; so that, when I returned to my mother's dwelling, it was with greatly subdued feelings, compared with those, I had possessed on the day of my primary engagement.

Indeed I felt so much disappointment that, I did not partake with any relish, the humble supper of porridge and milk which our little circle as usual gathered round, a circumstance that was noticed by my mother, and in particular by kind little Sissy, who put her arms round my neck and tried to console me.

Poor little Sissy! she little thought at the time, as she did so, that it was even better for her that I was thus disappointed, and that I should remain so; for, under such circumstances, I would be likelier to continue as a brother to her, than otherwise might be the case, were things going smoother and pleasanter, and more in



consonance with the utopian ideas I had been indulging in, and which ideas, if realised, were to promote myself, not others. She little dreamt, in short, that I was writhing under the disappointment of an incipient ambition to get up in the world, and to soar beyond the paltry position, which till now, I had occupied, but which I heartily despised. No doubt, if I did so advance, I did not altogether contemplate leaving entirely behind, the recollection of the past, or of those who had been my grovelling compeers in that—to be—repudiated, era of my existence; but, if I did remember them, it was to be only as a patron, and as a very munificent and condescending one.

I slept that night little, and what little I did sleep, was unrefreshing, and in strong contrast with the repose of poor Sissy, who, fatigued with the labours which her little hands and limbs were condemned to undergo at the mill, and disturbed by no ambitious or selfish aim, to eclipse her station, slumbered healthfully and refreshingly, on the coarse and hard crib, which she, along with her mother, occupied in a corner of the apartment, which served the whole family as dining-room, drawing-room, and dormitory.

I, however, arose the next morning, as early as usual, and again was at my post in the office of Samuel Silvertop and Company, in good time to do all the work, if not as thoroughly as I had done it, the day before, at all events, to such extent as was necessary, and which seemed to please both the head of the house and Mr Bracepiece equally well.

Mr Bracepiece on this occasion was prepared with some work for me. A parcel of circulars came in from the printer, and these he folded, sealed, and addressed, and then desired me to deliver them; which duty occupied a considerable time and imposed upon me no small exercise, both of the brains and the limbs, for the addresses of the circulars had to be sought out, and when attained, I found them in some instances situated as high up as three pairs of stairs reached.

By the time, too, that I had delivered these, and got back to the office, I found that a large supply of goods had come in, and which, being taken to a back office, where there was a table for the purpose, they were made up into small parcels, in which operation, assisted by Mr. Bracepiece, I acquitted

myself much to his satisfaction, I having studied the art of making up, and papering, and tying parcels, as practised by shopkeepers, by gazing at the process, through shop windows, when I had nothing else to do.



These parcels I was now despatched with, to several carriers' quarters throughout the city, they being addressed to customers of the firm, resident in the country, and as

some of these carriers' quarters lay at considerable distances from the office, it may be well believed that, I underwent no small fatigue in performing the duty.

The exertion, however, onerous as it was, was a pleasure compared with being idle, and suffering the *ennui* and tedium which I had experienced the day before, while doing nothing.

After this period, things went much pleasanter with me, at the office, in fact they improved from day to day, and I began not only to like, but to delight in my occupation, particularly as the office and the work became more familiar to me, and as I made acquaintance with the inmates of other offices, employed in like duties to those, I was engaged in myself.

I had many other ways, likewise, of interesting, if not amusing myself, connected with my position. I peeped into letters, which gave me an opportunity of learning how our distant customers were pleased, and how the business of the firm was getting on; pried into the ledger, when by any chance Mr Bracepiece left the office, and forgot to lock that important volume, by which I came to have a guess as to how the profits stood; and otherwise lost no opportunity of acquiring *useful* knowledge.

Nor was I altogether idle in the scribbling way; for, notwithstanding the injunctions I had got at first, and the covenant I had entered into, not to touch the office pens and ink, I lost no opportunity of employing these, on the scraps of old letters that had been torn and flung into the fireplace. I became a great studier of the several hand-writings on these, and where a letter or a figure was good, imitated it, and in doing this, could not fail to improve my own hand-writing.

I likewise imitated the hands of Mr. Silvertop and of Mr. Bracepiece, and could even sign the firm so like these gentlemen themselves, that few could have noticed any difference.

This emulation to be a clerk, of course, could not fail in time to come under the observation of my masters, and particularly that of Mr. Bracepiece, who, much to my joy, instead of reproving, rather encouraged it. He first entrusted me to address letters, then parcels, and then to copy letters themselves, into the letter-book, and which pleased him pretty well, with the exception of the orthography, the latter being, in modern phrase, rather too "*phonetic*" for his taste, but which, in course of time, gave way to improvement.

From less to more I got on wonderfully, in the office. In fact, Mr. Bracepiece could not keep me in work, for I exhausted everything in that way, which he entrusted me with, so far as supplementary books were concerned, and I daresay I would likewise have grappled with the ledger itself, had it suited him to place that mysterious commercial missal within my keeping.

This, however, was out of the question ; for not only was I too young, for such an undertaking, but the firm of Samuel Silvertop & Company being particularly jealous as to their business, made it a rule to maintain the strictest secrecy regarding it, and it was well, in consequence, that when I did make so bold as to peep into the big book, upon the rare occasions of Mr. Bracepiece's neglect, which have been alluded to, that that gentleman did not detect me.

Had he done so, I daresay he would have made short work with my engagement, and that I would soon have been in quest of other employment and other masters, in consequence.

Instead, however, of being in the least degree suspicious of me, he evidently placed the greatest confidence in my seeming ingenuousness and propriety, at the same time appreciating my exertions otherwise. As a proof of this, after I had been only a year in the employment of the firm, he doubled my salary ; at the end of another year he doubled it again ; and I daresay at the end of the succeeding year would have further doubled it, had he not had reasons for acting otherwise.

These he communicated to me in a very flattering, and at the same time, in a very satisfactory manner, one day when

we were left alone in the office by ourselves, with some chance of being undisturbed. He then explained that Mr. Silvertop was about to retire from the firm, and at the same time from commerce altogether. That, in consequence, he was to take the reversion of the business upon himself, but as the change involved the necessity of several connections being renounced, and only a simple and at the same time remunerative agency being retained, he would not require my services after a certain period. Although, however, he went on to explain, having observed the lack-a-daisical expression that my countenance had assumed at this rather startling revelation, he had taken care that I should be no loser by the change; for he had procured for me from another firm, a member of which had been in the habit of calling, on business, at *our* office, and had favourably noticed my attention and industry, the promise of an engagement, on a vacancy occurring, for three years, commencing with a salary of no less than forty pounds, and rising five pounds every year afterwards.

In that office, he concluded by informing me, I would have capital opportunities of getting on; for, in addition to the greater pay which I would receive, I would see business on a scale, compared with which, what I had witnessed in Samuel Silvertop & Company's, was as nothing.

It may well be supposed that this piece of information had an extraordinary effect upon me. Indeed, so much so was this the case, that I could not even utter a word in gratitude to my kind benefactor, who, looking at his watch, and declaring that he had an engagement to meet, rose from his seat, and passing from the office, left me to contend with the various emotions that pervaded my mind as I sat in Mr. Silvertop's arm-chair, which, for the nonce, I had popped myself into.



CHAPTER XIX.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Sad is the fact, that must be to'd—
Though told with shame, and tears—
We grow in selfishness and vice,
As we do grow in years!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

I DID not move from my seat in the office for some time, but sat pondering on the unexpected piece of good luck that had befallen to me, and building, in consequence, no small amount of castles in the air. I indulged in a perfect elysium of joy, which ran away with the time so rapidly, and delightfully, that I did not perceive twilight had stolen upon me, and that the brightness which I enjoyed, was that of my own ideas, and not of the sun or moon, although the latter might well have been said to have been influencing me, so nearly approaching to phantasies of the brain, were the absurdities which, I was allowing myself to entertain.

Starting up, however, I proceeded to close the office, after which, I felt a great desire to communicate my happiness to others, on the principle, perhaps, as the poet sings, that that delightful sensation "was born a twin."

Of course, it will very naturally be supposed that those to whom I should feel disposed to make such an important communication, could be no other than the members of my own family, namely, my mother and little Sissy, but such was not the case.

To be explicit, I now had others whose company had more attractions for me than that of those, I have named; for, although I have neglected to narrate anything regard-

ing these, I may now mention that I had for some months been cultivating friendships, and acquaintanceships, very different from what I had formerly been accustomed to.

I had not been, in short, the very dutiful and simple boy that I have been warranted, in representing myself, up to the period of my engagement with Samuel Silvertop & Company; but, if I must confess it, perhaps the very reverse.

Alas! instead, therefore, of going home to my mother and poor little Sissy, as I would certainly have done a year or so previously, and communicating, for their comfort and delight, the news of my promotion, with its accompanying pecuniary advantages, which should have been the means of raising them, as well as myself, in society, and of saving them, in particular, from heavy and even degrading toil—while, at the same time, procuring them something better in the way of nutriment, than coarse porridge three times a-day—I did no such thing.

On the contrary, I bent my steps towards the lodgings of a young man named Tom Throstle, whose acquaintanceship I had formed some four or five months previously, and whose friendship I had cultivated, in consequence of admiring his manners, and style of dressing, as well as his views of society, which were upon a much more extended scale, than I had been in the habit of contemplating, no doubt, from my ignorance and want of experience.

This chap Throstle, had, like myself, risen from the dirt; and in his own, as well as my opinion, had attained no small altitude; for he was in receipt of a salary of forty-five pounds per annum, as a clerk in a cotton spinning-mill office, and was enabled, in consequence, to occupy a lodging, situated in one of the lanes, that led from the Trongate, or main street of the city; and which lodging lay, up four flights of stairs, it being a portion of a small, loftily located, though snug garret flat, which was rented by a decent "widow-woman," of restricted means, named Mrs. Gusset, and who found it necessary to let a portion of said garret, towards the payment of her rent, if not towards the means of sustaining herself and a son, whom she was educating for the "holy ministry."

On rapping at Mrs. Gusset's door, which was opened by the worthy widow herself, I was immediately requested to

walk in, my friend Throstle being at home, and enjoying himself with a pipe, and a tankard of ale, as he sat *en deshabilité*—that is, in an old ragged surtout—at the window of his apartment, which commanded a splendid view of the roofs of the neighbouring houses, although by this time, they were almost completely obscured by the shades of evening, and the smoke of numerous chimney pots—a great variety of which, were observable from the said garret window.



I had often been in this lodging before, as the guest of Tom Throstle, and considered it a very comfortable "shop" indeed. It consisted of a single apartment—not very lofty in the ceiling, but high enough, if you did not wear your hat,—containing two half-concealed bed places, one of which was devoted to the slumbering hours of Tom, and the other to the accommodation of some small boxes, and a chest, which held the elements of his wardrobe. It likewise had a fire-place, a small black mahogany table, with a well washed out and faded cover; three or four old-fashioned straight-backed chairs; an old easy chair—which Tom occupied—and a rather "skrimp" carpet.

In my mind, Tom Throstle had always appeared a very happy and lucky fellow, to be able to possess such a lodging, and I had often thought that if ever I came to enjoy as large a salary as he did, I would have just such another; and which piece of ambition I had repeatedly expressed to Tom Throstle, on which occasions, he had been pleased to say that he approved of my ideas.

And now that I was about to realize this summit of happiness, it was not to be wondered at, if this pet idea should again flash through my mind, as with a joyous countenance I walked into Mr. Throstle's room.

Throstle was a cool fellow, and had a manner of his own, which he prided himself in. He did not rise from his chair

to welcome me, nor did he even say "how dy'e do?" but he gently tapped with one hand, the ashes from his little black cutty pipe—which pipe he used to say he valued more than its weight in gold—and with the other hand, raised the pewter tankard to his mouth and finished the contents thereof, after which he rubbed his mouth, with the back of his hand, and exclaimed, "Well!—you have just come as the elements are exhausted!"

It is probable that, in saying this, he meant to apologise for not asking me to partake of his hospitality on the occasion; but when I said that I had something of the utmost importance to communicate to him, and which would astonish and perhaps delight him, he replied, "hold hard a minute!—talking is dry work, so I'll send the old lady out for some more beer and 'bacco, and then I'll hear what you have to say."

This he proceeded to do, in the interim lighting a mutton dip, and in about five minutes afterwards—during which period I felt as if I would burst with the pressure of



my pent up information—the widow returned with two pewter pints of sweet ale, and a parcel of cut twist, which she placed on the table, along with twopence or threepence, of copper change, after counting which, and appropriating a pint to me, and a pint to himself, and refilling his cutty, and lighting it at the dip, Mr. Throstle sent out a savoury puff of smoke,—

which curled to the ceiling in the most approved shape of "cloud"—and exclaimed, "proceed!"

"Well then," said I, "I am about to leave the employment of Samuel Silvertop & Company, and I thought I would just call on you, Tom, and let you know about it."

"Indeed," replied Tom, "and do you call that good news?"

"Aye," I answered, "but Mr. Bracepiece has got me into Gunter, Slide & Company's, for three years, at a salary of £40

for the first year, £45 for the second, and £50 for the third. What think you of that?"

"Well," replied Throstle, with the coolness of manner that distinguished him, and which I adored, "its no more than a young fellow of your talents and attainments deserves, and its the least Bracepiece could have done for you, after serving the firm so faithfully and so well, for the time you have been with them!"

I was perfectly enchanted with this commendatory expression of Tom's sentiments towards me, and could not help turning round and eyeing the vacant bed place in his room, which he observing, exclaimed, "I know what you are thinking of. You'll now be able to join me in this lodging; for, of course, you'll never think of living any longer with your beggarly old mother and sister, and trailing your fatigued limbs through the mud of the Gallowgate, such a length of road every day, when you can live like a gentleman nearer to business!"

To this flattering remark regarding my mother and Sissy, I merely nodded assent, while Tom went on as follows:—"And it will suit both me and the old woman, Mrs. Gusset, deuced well; for to tell you the truth, both she and I, under present circumstances, are rather pressed—she in one sense getting too little for her lodging, and I in another, paying too much. Now, by your joining me, we will square it thus: we will pay her jointly four-and-sixpence a week, which to each will be two and threepence; and that, while saving me ninepence a week, will reward her with eighteenpence additional."

I thought a good deal of this calculation and scheme, but still I was forced to throw cold water upon it, by telling Tom that I was not immediately to commence with Gunter, Slide and Company, and consequently would not be in the enjoyment of the enlarged salary for a proportionate time; besides, I was obliged to confess, that little as I had been called upon to contribute towards my mother, out of what I got from Silvertop & Company, I had even been dilatory in paying that little, and was therefore actually in debt to her, which, in consequence, had straightened her and little Sissy's circumstances and comforts to a considerable extent.

To this Tom replied, "Oh! as to that, keep your mind

easy; a mother will never be so inhumane as to prosecute a poor son for debt; and as to the salary, why we will manage to discount that, so as to enable you to enjoy it before it is due."

The ingenious Tom meant by this that he would obtain for me credit, or as he expressed it, "tick," and as I looked upon him as an extremely clever fellow, I was very much inclined to endorse his sentiments, although I had great misgivings about them, at the same time. He left me, however, little choice in the matter, having once made up his mind to it; for he went on to say, that if I did not secure the vacant moiety of his lodging forthwith, I might possibly lose the chance altogether. "The fact is," he continued, "both Mrs. Gusset and I must do something, and that immediately; she in order to get more money, and I to pay less; for you know, she is bringing that lazy rascal of a son, Nahum, that she has, up for the ministry, and consequently has, in addition to feeding him, to pay his clothes and college fees, which amount to a tax upon her means, that is like to upset her altogether."

This was an appeal that I could not contend against. I

had often seen the said Nahum—a long, dismal looking student, on the stair—or in the lobby, on the occasions of my visits to Tom, as he strode past me in his rusty black clothes and shrunk second-hand red college gown, with a lot of books under his arm. I, therefore, agreed that, as soon as possible, I should take up my abode with Tom, on the terms that had been spoken of, and on the head of which I invited him to accompany me to a tavern close by, where I would treat him to a tripe supper, and a drop of something comfortable.



Tom and I accordingly adjourned to the tavern, where we had tripe in perfection, and no small allowance of ale and toddy, during the discussion of which, Tom amused me by a description of some parties he had been at lately, where there had been dancing and music, and where he had met with some remark-

ably fine girls, whom he would introduce me to, when I became enabled, as a fellow lodger, to go with him to these parties, to which, he did not doubt, he had influence enough to get me invitations, particularly if I went to the expense of a suit of "dress toggerly."

Tom here drew out several notes of invitations which he had lately got, to attend some of these parties, one being from Miss this, and another from Miss that, and these he provokingly flashed before my face. One of these, however, he allowed me to read, and though I was inexperienced in such literary productions, and no great scholar withal, I could not help being struck with its style, both as respected composition and orthography.

Still I was much taken with the gentility of the thing, and, with the happy life Tom led, to join which, I now became impatient, particularly as I was rather excited by the drink I had taken, and which, not being much accustomed to, had slightly intoxicated me.

The treat to Tom and myself, cost me a pretty penny, for, after paying the reckoning, I had little left in my pocket, and it was with something like a heavy heart that I turned my way homewards, as the town bells rang the hour of ten o'clock.

On my way, I turned matters over in my selfish mind. I contrasted the seemingly genteel position that Tom held, with my own vulgar one. I contemplated my "beggary mother," as Tom called her, and my little beggarly sister, with mortification. I began to feel a repugnance towards them, and to consider them, as being in the way of my advancement. The good luck which had befallen me that day, I looked upon as being peculiarly my own, and what nobody had any right to participate in, but myself. In my mind, it was but the commencement of greatness; but how was I to enjoy that greatness if I had such a millstone about my neck as these relatives?

I was in no happy mood of mind, in consequence, as I approached my mother's humble "bield"—that bield which till lately had possessed so many charms for me, but which now, alas! had all fled. I, therefore, entered it scornfully and sulkily, while throwing myself carelessly upon a chair, without deigning to cast a look on either of its inmates, although Sissy

had risen from her seat near the ingle, and had expressed a desire that I should occupy it.

Poor thing, although she had refrained from going to bed, entirely, that she might wait upon my coming home—an ordeal which of late, in consequence of my growing rather irregular in my habits, she had been obliged to practice, notwithstanding the fact that she had to rise shortly after five o'clock every morning, as a worker at the mill—and although she had retained for me a cog-full of porridge which she had kept warm at the fireside, with a cup-full of milk, I did not choose to recognise her at all.

On the contrary, I kept sulking and frowning in the corner which I had chosen, and to all the soothing remarks that were addressed to me, I only returned a surly humph!

As for the porridge and milk, I looked upon them as dog's meat, and—notwithstanding the supper I had taken in the tavern, with its accompaniments, had not agreed with me—I kept contrasting them, unfavourably in my mind, with the tripe, and the ale, and the toddy, which I looked upon as being so much superior, or at all events genteeler.

This, my ill nature soon led me to give practical proof of, for on poor Sissy approaching me with the porridge in one hand and the milk in the other, with a recommendation that I should taste and see how nice and good they were,



I brutally struck the trencher from below, with my hand, and scattered the contents thereof, over her face and person, as well as upon the floor.

Poor little thing—the outrage seemed utterly to confound her, and caused her to burst into tears, while my mother exclaimed against the shame and sinfulness of thus abusing the mercies of God, as she called them;

telling me at the same time, that to save them for me, both she and Sissy had straitened themselves—the meal the

porridge was made of, being the last they had in the house, and bought with the last penny they had in their purse.

Execrable scoundrel that I was!—so far from this appeal touching my feelings, as it should have done, and softening my heart, it had the contrary effect; for with something like a chuckle, at the lark—as my valued friend Tom Throstle would have called it—I hastily threw off my clothing; tossed my sotted body upon the bed; and rolled myself up in the blankets. Nor did my hardened mind even relent when I observed my poor mother and sister, after having gathered the remains of the porridge from the very floor, sit down thankfully to partake of them, though poor Sissy while she did so, continued to sob, which might have proved to me, if proof had been necessary, that her hunger was great, when it thus, as it were, prevailed over her sadness, caused by my inhumanity and intense selfishness.

CHAPTER XX.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

See the fast youth, how snobbishly,
He ventures to intrude
Upon the world,—nor knows 'tis but
The growth of puppyhood!

The Gooseclubbs Poet.

I AWOKE next morning, with a severe headache, at what I considered an early hour, for it was only shortly after six o'clock, and scarcely daylight, and yet I found that poor Sissy had, long before, left for her toilsome occupation at the mill, there being, in those days, no sufficient Factory Act, like what we, very properly, have now, to prevent people, and particularly children, from being overworked in such establishments. It is true that Parliament had legislated upon the subject, so far back as 1802, and again in 1809, when respective Acts, for such a desirable object, were obtained by the first Sir Robert Peel—the father of the great minister of the same name, whose demise, under such melancholy accompanying circumstances, the country had to mourn in 1850—but, unfortunately, these were inoperative, for the purpose aimed at, in consequence of some defects, connected with their construction; and it was not till 1833, that really workable Acts were obtained, greatly to his honour, by Lord Ashley, now the Earl of Shaftesbury, which have been in operation ever since, with acknowledged advantages—on all sides—to both employers and employed.

Early as the hour was, and painful as the sensations in my skull were, however, I did not feel inclined to slumber again, but after quenching my feverish thirst with a bottle of brisk “swipes,” which I sent my mother out for, I dressed

myself, and proceeded to turn out the contents of my trunk, and to examine my clothing, scolding my mother—who sat weeping with vexation—at the same time, for not having some of my linens washed and dressed, exactly to the point of perfection that I desired.

If the truth must be told, I was set on picking a quarrel with her, as a preliminary to the great step which, I had made up my mind to take, namely, to leave her house, and to take up my abode with Tom Throble; and this I at last



managed, for, on making some very hypercritical, and, indeed, unjust remarks upon the dressing of my shirts, and which mode of dressing, she particularly prided herself upon, she forgot her moderation so far, as to tell me pretty sharply, that perhaps it would be well if I got them done more to my mind, by some other person, and elsewhere.

This was just what I wanted, and I accordingly rejoined; that since she was so saucy, as to say so, I would take her advice, hypocritically insinuating, however, in my own way, that it was less from my own choice, than from the way she had been thus pleased to use me, that I did so. I thus managed, remarkably well, to play the part of the fox in the fable, and to demonstrate to her, if not to her satisfaction, at all events to my own, that in drinking at the lower portion of the running stream, she befouled that which lay above—consequently the quarrel was complete!

Abject and degraded as my mother was, and conscious of what she had been, and what I was cognizant of, connected with her career, she still possessed some pride, and consequently, she stuck to what she had said in her haste. And that she would do this, I indeed had calculated upon.

She, therefore, did not remonstrate with me, as I packed my trunk, with everything, belonging to me, that was in the house, and which, after finally locking and cording it, I

walked out with, slung upon my back, although I certainly expected that, she would request me to pay the balance I owed to her, and which amounted to something more than three pounds, a sum which I knew, considering the straitened circumstances, in which she and Sissy were, could not fail to be of considerable importance to her.

Perhaps she thought I was not in earnest, in acting as I did, and that I would repent, and come back again, ere I went



far; but if such were her ideas, she was greatly mistaken, for on I trudged with my load, for upwards of a mile, when, in consequence of daylight having advanced so far, and the part of the town to which I had attained having become more populous, whereby I ran the risk of being recognised by some of my *genteel* friends, while acting as a porter, I deposited it

in a small tavern, that Tom Throstle and I used to have a can of ale, and a pipe in, when he occasionally accompanied me a bit towards home of an evening—I being then in what may be called the probationary state of excess, that was to lead me to rebellion with my mother.

There I deposited, as I have said, the trunk, in the charge of the landlady, resolving to come for it again in the evening, when it was dark, and when nobody would know me, while carrying it.

I then walked on, and, by eight o'clock, disturbed Tom Throstle from his morning slumber, he being, like myself, none the better of his last night's dissipation, or as he very elegantly expressed it, "rather seedy," which induced him to send out for a red herring, with which he treated me, along with a share of his breakfast, which otherwise consisted of tea and toast, elements which, considering the porridge and milk, I had been accustomed to, I looked upon as being something quite aristocratic.

After our repast, Mrs. Gusset, the landlady was called in, when matters were explained to her by Tom Throstle, seeming much to her satisfaction, and a regular bargain entered

into with her, that I should become a joint lodger with him, in her house, on something like the terms that he had propounded the evening before; and this being arranged, we sallied out, to attend to our respective occupations.

Although I had now attained the goal of my immediate desires, however, I did not feel altogether happy under the circumstances; for, notwithstanding my extreme selfishness, my conscience upbraided me. The scene where I had repaid with gross outrage, the proffered kindness of poor Sissy, in spite of my efforts to banish it from my memory, often recurred to my mind. Do what I liked, it forced itself upon my imagination, and would not be kept away. Although I shut my eyes, I beheld the poor thing before me, weeping and forlorn. I saw her look of consternation. Above all, I saw her, forced by hunger, glad to partake of what I had abused, and this last feature of the little drama, in which I had borne so discreditable a part, would particularly suggest itself to me, when I would be regaling myself, with Tom Throstle, on mutton chops, or beef steaks, washed down with ale, for I had now become so much of a gentleman that I dined every day, at regular hours, and not too early—early dinners being, in my eyes, and likewise in those of Mr. Throstle, very vulgar indeed.



Sometimes too, of an evening, I would be left alone—Tom perhaps being away to one or other of those parties he used to brag about, for I had not as yet managed to get an invitation to any of them, although Tom was under a solemn promise that it would not be long before I was so honoured, my “dress toggerly” being all ready for the desired occasion. Under such lonely circumstances, the tallow dip being perhaps burned out, and the fire low, I was especially haunted by the apparition of my late impropriety.

So much so was this the case, that I do believe I would have relented, and gone back to my mother and Sissy, like a second prodigal son, with a petition for forgiveness—particularly as I was now getting rather pressed for money, in consequence of living beyond my income—had

an event not occurred to arrest the growing possibility of such a procedure.

This was nothing less than the arrival, at my lodging, of an invitation card, to an evening party, from a



young lady that Tom Throstle had one day introduced me to, while we were playing the part of *beaux*, on the fashionable side of the Trongate that was frequented, for such a purpose, by most of the "young gentlemen" of Glasgow at that time, the principal portion of

these walking gentlemen being, as now, clerks, warehousemen, and message lads, who had stolen out, at their respective masters' expense, to have a little exercise, and a look at the ladies!

The medium of this important (to me) invitation was, as has been said, a card; but such a card! It was triangular, gilt edged, pink coloured, and perfumed, with just a bead of wax for the seal; while, what delighted me most of all, was the address, which styled me "Esquire," instead of "Mister"—this being the first occasion on which I had received such an honourable and overpowering title.

It was unfortunate for me, however, that it arrived at the time it did, though, perhaps, not for my fellow-lodger, it being just as Tom and I were sitting down to dinner; for, what with the rat-tat at the door, the unexpected appearance of the three-cornered missive, the complimentary address, and the prospect of spending a delightful evening, such as my fancy had indulged in, ever since I had heard the description of such scenes from Tom Throstle, and which now rushed upon my mind with seductive vividness, I could not touch a bit of the beefsteak, from which the cover, in the shape of a plate, bottom upwards, had just been removed, by Mrs. Gusset, and, consequently, Tom got it all to himself.

The invitation was unique of its kind; and, to this day, I can repeat it verbatim, for I read it at least a dozen of times over, before I went to bed that evening, and as often the next morning. It stated that "Miss So-and-So presented her compliments to Mr. So-and-So, and *my* mother will be happy if *you* will favour *us* with the *pleasure* of your company to tea and supper, on such and such an evening, and at such and such an hour, along with your friend, Mr. Thomas Throstle," &c., &c., &c. Altogether, it was a stereotyped edition of the usual cards of invitation that Tom had been in the habit of receiving, and which had often led me to break the Tenth Commandment, so much did I covet his good fortune in obtaining so many favours of the kind.

Of course, I returned a polite acceptance of Miss So-and-So's invitation, in the shape of another card, and which I delivered with my own hands, into those of her worthy mother, who herself opened the door, when I rat-tatted thereat, the same evening, shortly after six o'clock, for the purpose—I having ascertained that the young lady would not be home till after eight, she being generally engaged out, as a mantua-maker till that time; and as her said mother did not know me, I thus got the credit of having been able to employ a rather respectable messenger, on the occasion.

It is true that I ran some risk, in perpetrating this dodge, of being discovered, for mothers are not always so blind, or so careless, as not to take particular cognizance of those who thus distinguish their daughters; but luckily on this occasion, I had reason to flatter myself, I got completely off, from such a difficulty; for, in the first place, the daylight had almost vanished when I presented myself at the "stair-head," where lay her residence; in the second, the candle, which the old lady held in her hand, blew out as she opened the door; and, in the third place, in order to receive the note, she had to wipe her hands, with her apron, free from soap-suds, the excellent woman having evidently been occupied in the very proper domestic engagement of washing—and all these contingencies contributed so much to the diversion of her attention from me, that my success was unmistakable.

It was with no small exultation, therefore, that I retreated from the door of my prospective entertainers, and wended my way to the establishment of a professor of dancing, named

Monsieur Passeul, with whom I had contracted, some days previously, to take twelve lessons in dancing and *politesse*—two or three of which, I had already got—at the cost of one guinea for the course.

Monsieur Passeul, of course, was understood to be a Frenchman, and, in consequence, supposed to be the very fittest individual in the world for instructing, in such accomplishments, although, when I came to speak to him, I could not observe anything particularly French about him, excepting that he spoke with an English accent, and asperated his vowels, an unmistakable proof, as Tom Throstle, who had introduced me to him, observed, of his Parisian origin.



I got on remarkably well with Monsieur, who played to perfection, even while dancing, and bounding, and capering about, himself, in order to show how the steps and figures should be performed.

There were other four or five young men, of like calibre to myself, who attended this class, and, by the ingenuity of Monsieur Passeul, we managed to go through with quadrilles, then quite a novelty, and just imported from France, country dances, minuets, and even waltzes—each young man in his turn alternately, taking the lady's part—there being, of course, no ladies in the class.

This occupation of my evenings, on the whole, I rather liked, and but for the circumstance that Monsieur Passeul was ever on the alert to notice my faults, in common with those of his other pupils, and, in consequence, often reminding me that I should point my toes, or keep my arms at my sides, or my hands down, or my legs straight, I would have enjoyed the thing thoroughly.

I, however, having my heart in the study, made wonderful progress, and, by the time the twelve lessons were exhausted, which was on the evening exactly previous to that which was to be devoted to the important entertainment of Tom Throstle's friends, I felt myself quite equal to the occasion, and up to the mark, at all events in my own estima-

tion, if not that of Tom's; for, as he sapiently remarked, while we talked matters over at night—and I received a good many advices from him, as to how I should comport myself—it would have been as well, if I had had some experience in civilized dancing parties, where ladies were present, instead of only “horse-marine quadrilles,” and “bull-reels,” with men who were as heavily footed as if they were hoofed, and shod with iron!

CHAPTER XXI.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Lead down the dance! O'er life's expanse,
We do but dance, from day to day—
Till cruel Death cuts short our breath,
When to the grave, we dance away!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

THE eventful day at last arrived, which was to usher me into what I considered, the very perfection of gay life and gentility; and therefore it may not be wondered at, if I should retain, to this day, a vivid recollection of its circumstances, and love to dilate upon all particulars connected therewith.

I spent a great deal of time, to begin with, immediately on rising from my bed, much to the annoyance of Tom Throstle,



whom I disturbed thereby, in inspecting the clothes I was to wear at the party, and afterwards in gazing at myself in the cracked looking glass, with the help of which the said Tom and I adorned ourselves every morning; I brushed and re-brushed my new coat, till it had not a speck on it; and I likewise attempted to make still brighter than they were before, my "dancing pumps," although I

thought I rather dimmed them than otherwise by the effort, and so likewise thought Tom, who took things much mor

sily than I did, he being, as he said, not so new fangled in such matters: a state I possibly myself might arrive at some day when, like him, I would look upon parties, rather as vain bores, than otherwise!

Of course, I ate very little breakfast that morning, and even less dinner afterwards, my thoughts being entirely engaged on what was to come; and immediately after the latter repast was concluded, I commenced to dress, while Tom smoked his pipe, and looked on, and criticised.

Although I took plenty of time, however, to embellish myself, I was finished with my toilet long before the period when we were to set out, and indeed before Tom had thought proper to commence, to the adornment of his person; I consequently had to wait his turn, while I felt myself stiff in my new nankeen pants, my buff vest, with an enormous ruffle sticking from my breast, which made me resemble, as Tom said, a "cropper pigeon;" and my long swallow-tailed blue coat, with brass buttons—these articles of dress being considered up to the most fashionable taste of the day.

At last, Tom and I, having rigged ourselves out, abandoned our lodgings, and held on our way towards our destination, he being arrayed similarly to myself, and as we passed along the streets, it not being yet quite dark, we began to attract the attention of the passers by, and particularly that of the boys, who stared most curiously, and impudently at us, and some



whom, even cried out "there go the dandies!" while tempting to imitate our gait.

This rather annoyed me, and I was glad when Tom intimated that he had to call at a shop, which I found to be that of a barber, and in which we both took refuge, I wondering what he was going to be about.

This I soon found out. In the shop there were other

three or four young men lounging about: one being at the time in the hands of the *friseur*, who, as soon as he had "polished him off," as Tom expressed it, took to another with a like result.

At last it came to Tom's turn, with whom the barber took particular care. He first enveloped him in a sheet, then he trimmed his locks and whiskers; then he curled the former with a pair of hot irons; and then he smeared his hair with an oleagenous mixture, till it shone again; all which accounted for the "Hyperion curls," as Hamlet expresses it, which Tom was in the habit of displaying, much to the excitement of my invidious feelings, but which, to this moment, I had thought were quite real and natural to him, although they did, at times, look more curly than at others.

On Tom rising from his seat, both the barber and he looked

at me, while the former said, "Have your hair dressed, Sir? — only sixpence, Sir!" and the latter followed up the suggestion, by saying, "Do so—you'll find it quite killing!" So I forthwith assumed the seat, and was immediately enveloped in the sheet.



The process was rather painful to me, for the *tonseur* rugged most violently at my locks with his hot irons, but for which he excused himself, on the plea that my hair was uncommonly

tough, and resistable to the heat, although, if I continued the process, he went on to say, it would soon yield, even as Mr. Throstle's had done.

I thought well of the barber's advice, for to tell the truth, this system of hair curling on the part of the youths of that day—and even on that of older and more staid men—was quite a fashionable practice. Indeed, a "dandy" was not considered up to the mark, if he appeared at a party, and particularly a dancing one, otherwise than with his hair resembling a *bouquet* of corkscrews, or the usual round swirley mop, still to be seen on board of steamboats, on

sea-sick occasions; while, at the same time, the hirsute trophy would be soaked and shining with "Bear's Grease," "Rowland's Macassar," "Marrow Ointment," "Rose Oil," or other "*creashy*" element, which now, is more appropriately applied to the lubricating of machinery. The expense, however, of the curling process, was a matter of some consideration, although Tom suggested an ingenious method of modifying it, by contracting with the barber—a system, which I found out, he had long ago adopted.

At last the curling was completed, and when I looked in the glass I did think it a great improvement, and in some measure a recompense for the torture I had undergone. I, therefore, cheerfully paid the barber his sixpence, and walked out, feeling that—what with my nankeen pants, my blue swallow-tailed coat, and my curls—I could not fail to make a favourable impression on the fair ones I was about to meet.

On arriving at the house of our entertainer, and which lay up three flights of stairs, as already has been stated, Tom rapped very loudly at the knocker, to add, as he explained, to our importance, and the door being duly opened, we



walked in, to find ourselves the first comers, for, as yet, there were only present the old gentleman—a very worthy man, and well to do in the world: he being the clerk of a coal office—the old lady, in her best silk gown, and capacious turban—for at that time a turban was the most fashionable head-dress a lady could wear—the young lady, their daughter, on whose account the dance was being given; and a couple of youths, her brothers, who were fast growing out of their clothes, for the sleeves of their jackets did not cover their wrists, nor their trousers their ankles, while their necks shot up from their shirt collars, with their heads above all, like winter cabbages in a kitchen garden, when covered with snow.

This nice family of five were, on our entering, seated on one of the forms that lined the sides of the room, chairs for the nonce, being dispensed with, on account of the space they

would have taken up, and as we popped our noses through the doorway, they all rose simultaneously to welcome us, with an immense shaking of hands, and an inquiry after our health, and remarks upon the weather, which ceremony, to me, who had never been so saluted before, was quite overpowering; and after these questions had been duly answered, carelessly by Tom, and very truthfully by me—for I explained that “I



had lately had a bad cold, and that it was a fine evening, though it had rained in the forenoon”—we took our seats in continuation, bobbing up like the family, when any fresh arrivals took place, when we witnessed shaking of hands as before, and heard like questions put, as to health, and as to the weather, with like answers thereto.

The knocker of the door was now going at a pretty rapid pace—rap, rap, rap, and tap, tap, tap—all of which we heard perfectly, for the lobby was rather short and small, and the single servant woman was getting plenty of exercise in opening and shutting it—she being, as I casually learnt shortly afterwards, from a gossiping young man that was present, a sister of our worthy host, performing the part of “slave” for the occasion. And so much, indeed, did the company increase, that I began to fear the room would be choked up.

However, things were managed so uncommonly well that, with a little squeezing, space was procured for all, and now we sat around on the forms, rather boltishly upright, it is true, but with comparative comfort considering circumstances,

while tea, and toast, and biscuits were being handed round, in a great variety of salvers and cups, by the young men with the protruding wrists, and ankles, and necks, that have been noticed already, and who proved themselves to be extremely useful fellows, under the circumstances.

It was a grand sight to me, this preliminary partaking of refreshments, and as each sat with a cup in one hand, and a bit of the edible in the other, saying nothing, so much were all impressed, while they sip, sipped, and smack, smacked, the light began to dawn upon me, as to the superiority of civilised refreshing, over barbarous bolting.

But now a fresh arrival takes place that sets us all agape, for it is nothing less than Monsieur Passeul and his fiddle, attended by a blind man carrying a bass fiddle, whom I had seen and heard a hundred times before, on the streets, enchanting the citizens with his music, and attracting from their kindly hands, to an old hat, that was carried by a little girl, in a ragged dress, coppers in general, and occasionally a sixpence.

Monsieur entered the room with a graceful bow, that perfectly charmed us all, for I remarked that it was vainly, and, indeed in some instances, ludicrously, imitated afterwards by some of the *beaux* present. He shook hands with the host and hostess, and others of the party — no doubt his pupils — and he was presented with a cup of tea and a biscuit, which he consumed in the attitude of Apollo, while poor "Blind Bob" got none, though, from the manner with which he rolled his white vacant eyeballs, he might have excited pity to the extent of bread and butter, at least.

The pause that now took place was rather painful, for evidently every one was in the expectation of something eventful being about to occur. And they were right, for Monsieur applied his fiddle to his shoulder, and gave it a rasp with his bow, while all simultaneously sprung to their feet, the *beaux* leading the



belles to the floor, which, consequently, scarcely left standing room.

Alas! there was none for me to lead up, for I now ascertained that all, with the exception of Tom and myself, had come mated, and even he in effect was so, for it was understood that the young lady of the house was his sweetheart, and, in proof of this, he led her, as though by arrangement, to the head of the room, where both stood in the preparatory attitude, for springing into the gyrations of a brisk country dance, whenever it should please Monsieur Passeul and his *vade mecum*, Blind Bob, "to discourse music."

Twang, twee, fiddle-de-dee!—they at last struck up, when off went Tom and his fair *inamorato*;—hands across—down the middle—up again—and *pousseette*!

"An' he bobbitt,
An' she bobbitt,
An' they a' bobbitt!"

And, altogether, the dance was very heartily danced out, all returning to their seats panting, and some of the ladies exhausted, or, it may be, only pretending to be so, if we were to believe the insinuation of one rough fellow, who loudly proclaimed that they were "a pack o' strong hizzies!" a compliment which the ladies did not seem to appreciate.

A short lull now took place, while Monsieur Passeul and Blind Bob screwed their fiddle strings, and rasped their bows across them, with unmeaning sounds, till they had got their respective instruments into harmony with each other again. After which a more select and less numerous portion of the company, than had been previously up, rose, to go through a set of quadrilles, and which, being a dance that had very lately been imported from France, naturally created considerable interest among those who retained their seats.

Four couples only were destined to perform in this dance, and amongst these were Tom Throstle with the young lady of the house, having for their *vis-a-vis*—or as a young lady, who sat near me, pronounced it, *veez a veez*—another couple whom I had remarked particularly, in the preceding dance.

This pair had been, as, indeed, they still continued to be, throughout the evening, the "observed of all observers," the lady being considered a beauty, and a very splendid dancer

as well, while the gentleman was tall, and a great *beau*, and, particularly by the fair portion of the company, looked upon as being remarkably handsome, although he was rather hard-featured, and blind of an eye.

I cordially agreed in this opinion, so far as regarded the lady; for I had been much struck and impressed by her appearance, when she first entered the room, and more so after she had commenced to "trip it on the light fantastic toe;" but I differed with it, in respect to the gentleman, of whom I had at once formed an unfavourable opinion, in consequence of his self-conceit and puppyism, added to the familiarity with which he addressed his partner, and whom he seemed to have determined upon monopolising that evening.

Who this couple were, I learned from the communicative, gossiping youth, that had formerly given me information regarding the family arrangements of our entertainers. The lady, he said, was the show-woman of an extensive silk, drapery, and haberdashery establishment in town, she having been selected for the purpose, on account of her handsome



figure, which displayed, to the greatest advantage, the different garments, the disposers had for sale, and which she threw on, and marched from side to side with—having

studied her attitudes previously, with the aid of a pier glass—to show their lady customers how these dresses would look upon themselves, after they had become the purchasers thereof. Everything, he went on to say, became her, on account of her symmetry and carriage; and, therefore, she was most invaluable to the firm, whose shawls, scarfs, and cloaks, in consequence, went off rapidly, to every dumpy, crooked, or clumsy woman, that came for such commodities, and who thought, they were obtaining some of the show-woman's elegance and symmetry along with their purchases. As for the gentleman, my valuable informant further explained, that he was a journeyman poulterer—in other words, the son and assistant of a celebrated poultress, named Mrs. M'Chuckie—vulgarly called Lucky M'Chuckie—who carried on an extensive business in that line, but which, it was understood, she was about to resign in favour of the said son, having herself realised a comfortable competency. "And, I suppose," said my friend, as a peroration to his narrative, "he intends to marry the show-woman, as an additional feather to his cap, on the occasion of his assuming the profitable reversion of the old hen-wife's business, who has laid such a comfortable nest-egg for him!"

I could not help envying the big poulterer, on account of his double good luck, and particularly that moiety of it which promised him the hand of the lady, who now appeared, in my eyes, as she stood ready to commence dancing, a perfect Galatea about to be sacrificed to another Polyphemus.

But all these unworthy thoughts were cut short by Monsieur Passeul and Blind Bob, who were playing the introduction to the first figure, which being completed—at it the dancers went!

Of course, I had seen quadrilles before, but never in the same perfection as now, for, as has been before explained, when I figured in these myself, along with others at Monsieur Passeul's, all present were of the male sex. Now, however, the dance was fitted as it should be, half and half, and the fairer portion, in addition, were gaudily dressed.

Nor was it ordinary dancing either, that I was now about to witness, for, on Polyphemus—otherwise Mr. M'Chuckie, the journeyman poulterer—having danced forward and then backward, while clattering his hooves, so as to allow Galatea

to perform "a solo," as Tom Throstle called it—that young lady showed what could be done with the feet. Away with your modern skimming of the carpet! Away with your mere sliding and attitudinising! She almost sprang from the floor to the ceiling! She glided from side to side. She rushed backward. She bounded forward; and she cut like an opera girl, till the spangles in her shoes glittered like stars in the firmament, or rather, as Tom Throstle expressed it, like sparks from the fireworks on a king's birthday evening.



If I admired the lady before, I doubly, trebly, nay, quadruply, admired her now. Indeed, to be confiding to the reader, I felt the primary sensations of incipient love stealing over me, which caused me to adore the very shadow of Miss Tucker, as she was named; and in a corresponding ratio to hate Mr. M'Chuckie, whom I could not help regarding as my rival, as he led her to her seat, after the quadrille had been brought to a close.

I was engaged in ruminating upon the loneliness of my position, and my bad luck in being obliged to sit, while others were so happily engaged in dancing, when I was addressed by Tom Throstle, who said he would put me in the way of getting a partner, for which purpose he invited me to follow him to an adjoining small room, where we found our host engaged in manufacturing a bowl of punch, and halving, or rather quartering, oranges, for the regalement of the company.

CHAPTER XXII.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Sweet are the music, and the dance—
They cheer both soul and body;
But sweeter, and more cheering, are
The supper, and the toddy!

The Goose-dubbs Poet.

ON reaching the small room, which lay but a step from the "ball-room," as the latter was dignifiedly denominated by some of the party, we found, as already has been observed, our kind host, engrossed amongst the chemicals, that are usually brought into requisition, when cold-punch is the potation, in



demand. He squeezed lemons, he crushed sugar lumps, he dashed in cold water, and he "skinked" the whole with a mighty wooden ladle, till the mixture sparkled and hissed in the delf bowl that contained it, like water rushing from the wake of a steamboat's paddles.

The worthy old gentleman then sipped the concoction, to find if it was correct; then added water, and sipped again; then sugar, and further sipped; then a squeeze of a lemon, and once more sipped; then water again, and still sipped. Indeed, I was beginning to think, that he would finish the bowl, and give Tom and me none of the punch, so long and so provokingly did he thus critically act.

In the meantime, Tom made an important communication, in a whisper, to me. He had observed, he said, that I had sat while the others had danced, and that I was likely to continue to do so, unless he came to my relief. What he pro-

posed was this:—He would “excambiate” partners, with Mr. M’Chuckie; that is to say, he would borrow from him, for the nonce, the lovely Miss Tucker, and lend the daughter of our host, and then he would make over the former to me, so that I might dance with her, while he would refrain from dancing himself.

I could not but highly applaud this generous and disinterested proposal, on the part of my friend, although I felt some queer qualms steal over me, when I came to consider, that I would stand in such close quarters with one, who appeared a goddess in my eyes. Indeed, the very thought of it paralysed my limbs, and as Tom left for the purpose of carrying his scheme into execution, I felt my very knees rapping against each other, from the effects of the perturbation into which I had been thrown. My head swam; the very pictures on the walls of the room danced before my eyes; and everything bore a dreamy confusion. So much so, was this the case that, sitting like a lonely statue in the little room—the old gentleman after his manufacturing of the punch having left it, probably for the purpose of bringing some of the party to partake of the “browst,” I did not think it anomalous when I descried two deminude little figures creep along the floor, from what appeared to be a cupboard, with the stealthiness and activity of mice, and, after “grabbing” some of the cut oranges and biscuits that lay on the table, slip back again to their den.



I was recalled to consciousness, however, by the return of the host, who was just in time to notice the abstraction of the cakes and fruits, and who brought me to more active sensation, by administering summary chastisement upon the delinquents, who turned out to be the younger portion of his family circle, who till now had been immured in a concealed bed, and who had stolen out from thence, for the purpose of cribbing some of the luxuries going.

Poor things, they deserved pity instead of punishment, and a share of the good things, perhaps more than the bigger bairns that got them; but as to the justice or injustice of this view of the case, there was no time for debating, for Tom Throstle now entered the room leading Miss Tucker, blushing to the bowl, and whom, the smiling host rewarded with the first brimming bumper of the punch, who, as she held it in her lovely grasp, reminded me of Ganymede; only that instead of presenting the cup to Jove, she tumbled the contents thereof down her own divine gullet, declaring, at the same time, or rather immediately thereafter, that it was delightful; whereupon Mr. Throstle filled her glass again, which, with very slight inducement, she was prevailed upon to send after its predecessor.

Miss Tucker was now all smiles. Her countenance beamed like that of Aurora,—how strange that the remembrance of it, should cause me to associate her so much with the inmates of the Pantheon—or rather Venus, for it being evening, she could scarcely, for some hours yet, be the morning star. She indeed, looked lovely, and all the more so, that she was not accompanied by the formidable Mr. M'Chuckie, whom I flattered myself she did not miss, seeing that Tom Throstle by this time, had introduced me to her, and I had already told her the state of the weather, and remarked upon the heat of the ball-room, and the coolness of the punch, all which

interesting information, she paid marked attention to, and likewise, —if I might judge from the way she stared,—to my curls, which, from a glance that I had obtained in a small looking-glass, that hung on the wall, I was gratified to see still looked as fresh as when I had left the hands of the hairdresser.

Tom Throstle, by this time, had broken to her his proposal, that instead of dancing with him, she should do so with me, and to this she

at once agreed, when, after a third glass of punch, away we adjourned to the ball-room, where we at once placed ourselves in the best position for commencing another set of



quadrilles, that had just been proclaimed by Monsieur Passeul, as about to commence, and towards the promotion of which, he stood with violin at his neck, and bow in hand, ready to rasp.

My sensations at this moment, were of a varied description. Indeed, I could scarcely realize to myself the fact that I now stood in what had been the position of the formidable M'Chuckie, and had, in a measure, supplanted him. But what, let it be fancied, must they have been when I found myself hopping upon the floor, while stared at by all present; poussetting with Miss Tucker; advancing and retiring with her; and above all, galloping round the room with her, with one hand reposing on that lovely zone, which till now had been devoted to the monopolizing embraces of M'Chuckie, and of the robes of Tweel Braid & Company, her eminent employers? It will not be wondered at, when I declare that I did not know for the first five minutes at least, whether I danced on my feet, or on my head.

And all this time I was gazed at by the fierce M'Chuckie. Although he danced with Tom Throstle's partner, his attention was entirely directed to Miss Tucker and me. He averted not his single eye a moment; indeed so much so was this the case, that I felt that if that eye had been an arrow, or a bullet, or a sword, it would have been through, and through, my poor body. He was evidently all jealousy and hatred; in proof of which, the moment the quadrille was ended, and ere I could lead the charming Miss Tucker to a seat, he had pounced upon her, had got her arm enchained with his, and had led her to the cold punch, which was the only thing upon which he allowed her now to bestow her favours, beyond himself, for the rest of the evening, not even excepting Tom Thostle, whose attempts to get a dance with Miss Tucker, by fair means or foul—by exchange or favour—he resisted perseveringly, and it may be added, successfully.

The remaining portion of the evening, before supper-time, was passed pleasantly enough; for although I found myself obliged to resign all hopes of again pressing even the hand of Miss Tucker, I felt gratified that I had been enabled to acquire her acquaintanceship, and which I secretly resolved to follow up, in my own way, and for my own advantage—and this of itself I considered no small matter.

It was clear, however, that if I was fortunate, in one respect, I was not so in another; for M'Chuckie was now unmistakably as much my enemy, as I flattered myself the lady was my friend, in proof of which, when we—the male portion of the company—had retired to the street for the purpose of enabling the supper to be laid in what, till this time, had been called the ball-room, and get the air; he not only cut me direct, but sneered pugnaciously in my very face, and which offensive proceeding he had the audacity even to repeat, when we had again met at the board, which was now spread out with the important collation that all were by this



time, ready to partake of.

The supper was very grand and very imposing in my eyes. It consisted of a boiled leg of mutton and turnips, a sizable roast of beef, almost swimming in fat gravy, and several dishes of potatoes, all of which, I learned from my gossiping friend, had been kindly prepared in the house of an adjoining neighbour, who was present at the ball. There were, likewise, some tarts and confectionaries, and plenty of small beer, during the gormandizing, and hot whisky punch, after it.

I will not, of course, be expected to dwell upon the gastronomic incidents of this supper. It is sufficient to say that the mutton and roast beef were done great justice to, by us all, as we sat round the room with good solid platefuls thereof, placed on our knees, not even excepting the lovely Miss Tucker, who (to use a vulgar expression of Tom Throstle) "tucked in uncommonly," as she was from time to time supplied by the attentive M'Chuckie, whom, with my jealous ears, I heard addressing her, in such vile familiar words as these:—"Will you take some more *biled* mutton, Agnes?" or, "Will you take another tuppenny tart, dear?" And to which she would reply, "No, Charles; but I'll take a penny cheesecake!"

But now the hot whisky punch is going its rounds, under the liberal auspices of our host, who wields his formidable

wooden ladle, as a prince might do his sceptre, and we are all getting garrulous, and some of us jolly, and even musical, for already a couple of songs have been sung, and calls for more made, by those who have the privilege.

At last it comes to Miss Tucker's turn to charm us in that way, she being, as my useful informant now tells me, in addition to her other accomplishments, a sublime vocalist, and which she proves herself to be, perfectly to my satisfaction, by the performance of the following cantata, which Mr. M'Chuckie announced as "The Corsair's Bride:"—

Hark!—hark!—hark!

'Tis a gun!—'tis a gun!—'tis a gun!
It is fired from the Corsair's bark,
While she dips her flag to the sun.
To the western setting sun,
Which sinks midst gold and flame,
As it casts its blaze, in streaming rays,
On that bark, without a name!

And now!—now!—now!

A boat from that ship doth dart,
It points with its dashing prow
To the shore, where the joy of his heart.—
His own sweetheart,—doth live,
A maiden both bright and fair,
Whose father, severe, and proud, and austere,
Hates the bold, and the brave Corsair!

But!—but!—but!

That father shall wake to woe,
When he finds, on the morn, that the maid,
Hath fled from his home, with his foe!
And that now, on the deep she roams,
In that bark, with the yards so square,—
And the desperate crew, so brave, and so true,—
As the bride of the brave Corsair!

We all vehemently applauded the song of Miss Tucker, first by means of loud clapping of hands, and subsequently by the ruffing of our feet on the floor, which must have rather astounded the inmates of the flat below, during which process the amiable performer looked as modest and grateful as possible, while she refreshed herself after the exertion, by partaking of a glass of whisky-toddy, handed to her by the attentive M'Chuckie, whom, in consideration thereof, I pre-

sume, she now rewarded, by calling upon him, in the exercise of her undoubted prerogative, for a return song.



Mr. M'Chuckie accordingly prepared himself, seemingly nothing loath, to respond to the call, first by clearing his throat with a loud "hoast;" then, by running his voice up the gamut, and down the ditto; then, by sipping toddy; then, by casting his one eye to the ceiling; and lastly by giving vent, in what I considered, a very unmusical voice, and with an affected and blatant manner, to the following ditty, which he dignified with the title of "A Love Song:"—

Oh! beautiful maiden, my heart it is thine—
A heart both devoted, and true;
But soon 'twill be silent, and lonely, and cold,
If it finds no approval from you!

A-hoo!

If it finds no approval from you!

I wander far east, and I wander far west,
I wander far north, and south, too;
But the only enjoyment within my sad breast,
Is to ponder and think upon you!

A-hoo!

Is to ponder and think upon you!

Then say, lovely maiden! if thou wilt be mine,
And ever be faithful and true;
While devoted and firm, my heart shall be bound,
In love and affection to you!

A-hoo!

In love and affection to you!

We were very frugal in our bestowal of applause towards Mr. M'Chuckie, who was evidently no more a favourite with the general company, than he was with me. Indeed, I may say, that we "damned him with faint praise," for one young lady was heard to exclaim, "very pretty!" which sent a titter round the room that subsequently ended in something like a "guffaw," and so provoked the said M'Chuckie, that he rose

from his seat, and taking the hand of Miss Tucker, rather officiously, proposed to commence the dance again, much to the annoyance of Tom Throstle, who had expected to have been called upon for the next song, and with which he had hoped to eclipse all rivals, he having rehearsed it to me a dozen times.

The Fates, however, were unpropitious towards Tom, who was not destined to sing his song that night, for by this time the general company had sprung to their feet, and were now busily engaged in removing the supper table, which being accomplished, dancing was resumed with renewed vigour and spirit.

The dancing now became "fast and furious," as Burns says, anything like stiffness or ceremony having been put to flight by the good supper, and particularly the good drink, that had been partaken of; and, consequently, all reeled, and waltzed, and quadrilled, "with life and metal in their heels," to their heart's content. Foremost in such displays, as might have been expected, were Miss Tucker, and Mr. M'Chuckie, and particularly the former, who even eclipsed what had made such an impression upon my youthful heart, in the first part of the evening—the only limits to her bounding, and pirouetting, and cutting, being the restricted dimensions of the room.

It was not, of course, my good luck to dance with Miss Tucker, for the huge M'Chuckie took care that neither I nor any other "gent" should have such rare felicity.

I, however, managed to get that recreation with one or two plainer girls, in the course of which, I had the gratification of clasping the palm of Miss T., on the occasional crossing of hands which took place, and which the M'Chuckie could not prevent, when I gave it a squeeze, that I thought was returned, and this was a source of much hope and encouragement to me.

In the course of time, and pretty far advanced in the morning, the ball was brought to an end, by our dancing "Bab at the Bowster," from which, however, the vile M'Chuckie kept back both his own and Miss Tucker's presence. But if he did this at the dance, he did not do so, at the "*doch an dorch*," in the shape of a last bowl of steaming punch, which our host insisted on introducing; and

which we all partook of—finally winding-up with the song and chorus of “Auld Lang Syne.”

The song having ended, of course, the ball ended. And then what a shaking of hands took place, while lads waited till their lassies were busked, for the purpose of seeing them home. Aye!—and what a smacking of lips took place, as the company wound down the dark staircase!

—“Ilk smack still, did crack still,
Just like a cadger's whip!”—



It was in something like a melancholy, but still philosophic humour, that Tom Throstle and I found ourselves at last at home. The bells were actually ringing half-past five o'clock, and daylight had nearly dawned. We still, however, before going to bed, had time to chat matters over, with the assistance of a pipe, and a glass of ale, when we agreed that Miss Tucker was a most charming girl, and at the same time, that Mr. M'Chuckie was a monster, whom to supplant in the esteem of the former, would not only be a just, but a dutiful proceeding!

CHAPTER XXIII

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Selfish ambition! led by thee,
We've no regard for others;
While, but to magnify ourselves,
We'd cut our very mothers!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

I AWOKE after being in bed, only a few hours—although I found that Tom was up, and had been out for some time—feeling myself rather feverish and nervous, probably from having dreamt greatly of the ball, and, in particular, of Miss Tucker, whom, in my sleeping fancy, I had again and again danced with, notwithstanding the jealous opposition of Mr. M'Chuckie, who, in the shape of a nightmare, was ever grinning and frowning at me with impotent exasperation.

The whole period of my repose, such as it had been, indeed, was a succession of singular dreams, or rather, to speak more correctly, a succession of incidents or scenes, connected with one continuous dream, during which the instruments of Monsieur Passeul and Blind Bob kept loudly squeaking, and booming, and buzzing in my ears, as an accompaniment to the phantasm. Amidst its confused course, too, characters and individuals, whom I had met with, and familiarly known during my life, although they had not been present at the real ball, appeared and took part in it, with those who had been actually present, in the most unreasonable, and grotesque manner, and that, too, without causing me to wonder that such should be the case. For instance, Miss Tucker would be cutting, and springing, and pirouetting alongside of

Mr. M'Chuckie, when all of a sudden the countenance of the latter would turn into that of my late *quasi* stepfather, who had suffered so many years before, along with his devoted chum, and fellow-housebreaker, Barney, in front of the gaol, and there he would caper away, changing hands and turning the lovely Tucker, while the end of the rope, which still was



attached to his neck, would lash round and about, and come rap against the very faces of those present, as he performed some centrifugal gyration or other, like the whisk of a mare's tail, when the animal is put out to enjoy May grass, after a winter of hard meat. Then Miss Tucker's face would change, and it would become that of my mother—looking sad, but still dancing and cutting fantastically. Anon, instead of the male figure being M'Chuckie, or the malefactor that has been named, it would become that of my poor father, with his silver boatswain's whistle dangling from his neck; and after he had danced a while, it would become that of Mr. Silvertop, who suddenly would change to the Bald Billygoat, who in a little, would be wheeling with—instead of Miss Tucker,—no less than little Sissy; poor little Sissy, whom I had so long seemingly forgotten, and despised, and neglected, in common with my mother and aunt, and who, for aught I knew, or cared, might, or might not, be still existing where I had left them, for a period, which now included many months, during which time, if they ever did

revert to my mind, I strove to banish them therefrom, in the most summary and heartless manner—so selfish, hard-hearted, and mean-minded, had I become.

It was with the countenances of my mother and Sissy glaring at me in the face, and appealing to me, indeed, that I had awakened; and as I rubbed my eyes, and felt myself actually in my bed, I could scarcely make myself believe that I had really not been present with them.

Having satisfied myself as to this delusion, and indeed, felt relief that what had occupied by slumbering, and yet active mind, was a dream, and not a reality, I commenced a series of thoughts and speculations regarding them, not very favourable towards their interests, but indeed, the very reverse.

I represented to myself, amongst other ideas, what a horrid thing it would be, if the lovely, amiable, and genteel Miss Tucker should come to know that I had such mean relations! I likewise felt acutely, how humbled and degraded I should be, if even M'Chuckie, my rival in her affections (as I flattered myself he only amounted to) should triumphantly learn that my mother was a washer-woman, and my sister a mill-girl. In addition, I felt the full force of the ridiculous figure I would cut, if the general company, that had been present at the ball, should have the least suspicion, that the neat young man, who had excelled, to some extent, the tall M'Chuckie, and who had capered so nimbly in a blue swallow-tailed coat, with brass buttons, and nankeen pantaloons—not to talk of his fine, crisp, curly hair—had been the associate of footpads, burglars, and all the riff-raff of the Goosedubbs of Glasgow!

Feeling all this, is it to be wondered at, if I should have actually shrunk from myself; and, as I writhed and turned in my bed, a perfect prey to the tormenting idea: that I should have wished never to see the face of my mother, or of Sissy again?

Of course, I am not going to stop here, to palliate such thoughts, far less to attempt any defence, of what may be considered an outrage against decency, against Christianity, against the laws of nature itself. But the fact of my thus truthfully laying bare my despicable conduct, may, to some extent, prove how ashamed I now am of it, when mature

years, and perhaps a few hard raps on the knuckles of my career, as well as of my conscience, have somewhat, I hope, humanised me.

Never to see them again! Never to see any of my *quondam* associates and relations—at least so far as such were connected with the Goosedubbs period of my existence—was, indeed, my hearty and sincere wish; but that I was to be gratified in its realisation, was quite another thing; for, even as I twisted myself amidst the paroxysm that my fancy had produced, aggravated as it was, by a headache and nausea—the effects of the hot and cold punch, and of the ale and tobacco, I had indulged in during the preceding night and early morn—I had it intimated to me, by Mrs. Gusset, my landlady, that my mother and sister were at the very door, and urgently desirous of seeing me!

This was what Tom Throstle would have designated “rather a stomacher” to me. Here had I been conjuring into my mind, somewhat gratuitously, the very circumstance that I most revolted from, and, as it were, deprecating it; and lo! I was about to have it actually *inflicted* upon me!

My first determination was to order them peremptorily to be gone, without seeing them. My next, to intimate that I was in bed, with a request that they should call again, when of course I would be out of the way. And my last, that I should see them, and hear what they had to say, while conducting myself as coolly, and as dignifiedly, and as civilly, as possible; for, although I had quite the disposition to follow out either of the two first proposals, it had dawned upon me, that I was not quite free to act so severely, partly from their having just pecuniary claims against me, which I was not prepared to liquidate, in consequence of my extravagance having got me into difficulties; and partly from their having it in their power to make known to the world if they choose (that is, the world I lived in, with Miss Tucker for my sovereign), what I really was, should they be driven to defensive, or vindictive extremities towards me, in consequence of my conduct to them.

Although it was therefore, very much against the grain, and although I did not feel in the best disposition—for my headache was now considerably pinching my bump of

benevolence, or rather, the part of my cranium where that bump should have been, I having no pretension to great development of the organ which indicates that particular virtue—I, after huddling on my clothes, proceeded to the door, where I found them patiently awaiting my coming; and having shut the said door behind my back, so that the inmates of the lodging should not hear what passed, I *innocently* begged to know what they wanted with me!

They made no immediate answer to this demand, but both stared wonderingly at me, while I had time to remark their respective appearances, which were considerably changed since I had seen them before. My mother was haggard and careworn, and at the same time, she was shabbily and untidily dressed; while Sissy, although clean and neat, looked pale and thin, and indeed far different from what she had formerly been. She was not the little girl of days gone by, but almost a woman grown, though still retaining much of that childish and ingenuous expression and simplicity of manner, which once had knit my heart in brotherly affection to her. Alas! that that heart should have become so hard, and so cold, and so unbrotherly since then!

I had to repeat my question again, before either spoke, when at last Sissy addressed me, while endeavouring to grasp my hand, but which attempt I resolutely withstood, by placing it behind my back.

What she said I cannot exactly repeat, but it was to the effect, that they had restrained themselves from coming to see me, till they could do so no longer. That they had long hoped for, and earnestly awaited my re-appearance, at their dwelling, thinking that reflection, and separation, would bring back my former feelings of affection towards them, and that I would pass over—or at least more favourably construe—the few little hot expressions of impatience and irritation, that unguardedly, had escaped from my mother, on the



morning when I so abruptly left. That they did not come now, to trouble me with their presence, from any gratuitous desire to force themselves upon my notice, or to make any demands upon my liberality, but merely to effect, if possible, a reconciliation, and bring me back to the natural bonds of kindly relationship, as a son, and as a brother; and that they felt lonely and uncertain in the position in which they were placed, having nobody to consult and advise with, excepting my father's sister, who was now little able to assist them in that way, she being old and weakly, both in mind and body.

This was the substance of poor Sissy's address, which, of course, was not expressed, with anything like conciseness, or happy choice of words, but in homely Scottish phrase, which I conceived to be enormously vulgar, and with something of a whine, which was rather irritating, particularly as it was accompanied by sobs and tears, that demeaned her appearance, and injured her expression.

All this time, I had coolly and haughtily hearkened to Sissy's artless, though sincere, address; but with the air of one who felt himself bored and intruded upon. In short, like a gentleman listening to the petition of a beggar, whom he only refrained from kicking from his presence, because such a proceeding would be undignified.

At last, I deigned to give a reply, and which consisted in my asking the simple question "If she was done; for, if so," I went on to say, "I would take the case to *avizandum*," thus borrowing, for the nonce, an expression I had heard Tom Throstle use, and which I considered very smart and very witty.

This seemingly puzzled poor Sissy, who appeared therefrom, to be completely put out; for she confusedly cast her eyes on the ground, and said nothing further.

It, however, had a different effect upon my mother, who now took speech in hand, and recapitulated almost word for word what Sissy had said, adding, however, a hint that if I was determined to continue to act as I had been doing, for so long a time back, I should at all events pay to her the sum I was owing, and which I must know was justly due to her.

This was a subject that of all others I was the least dis-

posed to hearken blandly to. I accordingly wrought myself into an apparent rage, in the course of which, instead of being conciliatory, as I had intended, I used language to my mother of the most offensive description, but which it is not necessary here to repeat, the object of it having been to induce her and Sissy to beat a retreat, as speedily as possible; and in this I was successful, for both now commenced to descend the stair, only that Sissy, who went last, turned round, and, while gazing at me through her tears, sobbed out these words:—"This is the last time that you will be annoyed by us, for we must now depart from where we have been staying; the Mill has been stopped for upwards of a month; both my mother and I are out of work; our rent is unpaid, and the landlord has seized our things; and—and"—but what she added I heard so indistinctly, that I was at a loss to make it out, for now she had descended several steps, and her utterance was convulsive. It sounded, however, something like a declaration, that they were starving, and I fear that in fact it was so.



What I might have been induced to do under such extreme circumstances, I know not: possibly to have stalked after them, and offered some paltry pecuniary aid, for I believe I had, after some minutes' reflection, with something like the disposition to do so, fumbled in my pocket, and turned over, with my fingers, the few coppers that remained of all the wealth which, within the past few months, I had so unworthily spent upon my ungratifying luxuries, and selfish pleasures.

This idea, however, if it really did exist, was soon banished from my mind; for at that moment I heard my boon comrade, Tom Throstle, coming tripping up the stairs, bellowing a jolly song, as was his wont, and which, for aught I know, was the one, which he intended to have sung, the night before at the ball, had he been so lucky, as to have been called upon, to exercise his musical abilities, in that way.

I, in consequence, retreated into the lodging, where I sat

myself down, as if nothing extraordinary, had happened, shutting the outer door behind me, the knocker of which was soon rat-tatted upon, by that brisk gentleman, who forthwith entered the room with a light and gleesome countenance.

"Ha! my boy," he exclaimed, as he entered the apartment, and threw himself carelessly on a chair, "I have news to tell you! I have already, this morning, seen several of the fellows, that were at the party last night, as well as others, and it is proposed that we should get up a subscription ball and supper, on a liberal and genteel principle, namely, that there should be no particular right, on the part of the gentlemen, to dance exclusively with the partners they may bring, but that all ladies should be available to any happy fellows that may be introduced to them by a matron—same as is practised at the great Glasgow assemblies, amongst the upper classes!"

Tom then went on to dilate further, upon the advantages and splendour, that would be attendant on this ball, which would take place in one of the crack taverns of the city, and the subscriptions to which, in consequence, would require to be a guinea for gentlemen, and half-a-guinea for ladies, which would include everything, such as music, supper, and drink. He said it would indeed eclipse the "aristocratic assemblies" themselves; for there would be nobody but handsome men, and beautiful women present, in consequence of the selective management that would be adopted; whereas at the higher "re-unions," as they were pedantically called, there were generally nothing but stiff and worn-out old foggies with bald heads, and prudish ancient dames with wigs, and a few lank dandies, and snub-nosed girls, though possibly there might be an occasional beauty that would skim the floor in a sort of half walking manner, but certainly nothing like Miss Tucker, who was really beautiful, and actually could dance.

He concluded, by informing me that he had put his own name down as a subscriber, and, at the same time, had mentioned mine, to the preliminary committee—of which he formed one—and he, therefore, did not doubt that I would be admitted, through his influence and recommendation, to be one of the select, on the occasion.

Of course, Tom meant, in making this communication, that I should feel myself highly flattered, and distinguished, by being thus included, and so most likely I would have felt, but for the weight that pressed upon my mind, in consequence of the scene that I had just had, with my mother and Sissy, not to mention the intolerable headache which I endured, as well as the consciousness, that the state of my finances were far from being satisfactory. I felt, indeed, considerable embarrassment, as to what answer I should give to Tom, which he noticing, commenced to rally me still further connected with the matter, in the course of which he pointed out what a grand opportunity I would have, through means of this ball, of ingratiating myself with the lovely Miss Tucker, whom Tom recommended me to present a lady's ticket to, before the formidable Mr. M'Chuckie could have time to do so, as no doubt he would, if he got the opportunity, and which Tom would take care to prevent, by providing me with tickets, before they were generally issued.



The very name of Miss Tucker had an immediate effect upon me, and the remembrance of her angelic figure, as she cut and wheeled in the dance, made my nerves thrill throughout my body. My headache, I thought, commenced to mitigate in intensity, and my self-accusing conscience, for my conduct to my mother and Sissy, to be less upbraiding. I began to feel myself reassured, and more like myself than I had been since I awoke, so that, when Tom and I sat down to a late breakfast, I believe I almost did as much justice to it as he did, notwithstanding that he had been up a couple of hours before me, and abroad at his ordinary occupation.

Of course, I was but too glad to authorize Tom to use his discretion, in recording my name as a subscriber to the

projected ball, with any conditions that might be attached thereto; and from that moment, while banishing, as much as possible, all misgivings that oppressed my mind with regard to my mother and Sissy, I commenced to build a thousand absurd castles in the air, as to my future flirtations with the adorable Miss Tucker.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

How often are our fondest aims
By circumstances foiled ;
And what we schemed so knowingly,
By simplest matters spoiled.

The Goosedubbs Poet.

I WAS late that morning in arriving at the office of Samuel Silvertop & Company—a circumstance rather unusual on my part ; for, to speak favourably of myself, I was in general very attentive to my counting-house duties, notwithstanding my aptitude for pleasures otherwise, which, however, were only indulged in after my work had been accomplished, and not during business hours. Besides, my occupation at the office had become quite light in consequence of the restriction that had taken place in the business operations of Silvertop & Company, caused by the changes that had been resolved upon sometime before, and which I have already alluded to. My lateness, therefore, was taken no notice of, by either Mr. Silvertop or Mr. Bracepiece, the latter of whom I, indeed, took the liberty of informing regarding the ball, as a great event, and who laughed heartily at some of the scenes which, in my simplicity, I narrated as if they had been quite up to the standard ideas of even Mr. Bracepiece himself, who had the *entrée* to the very best society in Glasgow.

Mr. Bracepiece subsequently communicated the matter to Mr. Silvertop, who, thinking it had been only a simple dance, and not in any way connected with dissipation, commended me for cherishing such pastimes, which, he was pleased to say, in his judgment, were just the things for

young people in the hey-day of life to enjoy, and much better than pleasures where drinking and debauchery were concerned.

Worthy old man! he little knew that, under the resemblance of simple exuberance of spirits and exercise, at such scenes, every variety of dissipation and selfishness could be indulged in to the fullest extent.

Neither Mr. Silvertop nor Mr. Bracepiece had ever had the slightest suspicion of my real character, and, therefore, looked upon me as a perfect Joseph, who could do no ill; so that, when I came to leave their employment for the more active and remunerative engagement which they had kindly procured for me, in the house of Gunter, Slide, & Company, and which event took place in the course of a week after the important epoch I have been attempting to interest the reader in, these kind gentlemen, in addition to the balance of my salary, which was payable at my leaving, presented me with a bonus of ten guineas, over and above, and, at the same time, with a handsome written certificate of character, eulogistic of my talents and abilities, and of my attention to business during the period of my services in their employment.

These munificent presentations were, of course, most acceptable to me, and particularly the pecuniary portion thereof, for it not only enabled me to clear myself of the debts I had contracted with my landlady and others, but it left a residue more than sufficient to liquidate what I owed to my mother, whom, as well as Sissy, I consequently forthwith resolved to see; and, while paying the former her claim, to enter into an *arrangement*, as to my connection with both, for the future.

My ideas on this subject, of course, were sufficiently selfish, my desire being, at as small a pecuniary cost as possible, to annihilate them as relations entirely; to get quit of them for ever; to make their existence a myth, and their name a blank; so that when I came to be the great man I felt myself incipiently growing into, I should not be hampered by their connection, even nominally, far less really.

It was, therefore, with something like the air of a dictator, that I found myself, about a fortnight after this, with the residue of my late employer's ten guineas, amounting to

ixt three and four pounds, in my pocket, marching one ny and wet afternoon, wrapped up in my cloak, towards urther and Sissy's humble dwelling—that dwelling which, a few years before, had been as dear and delightful to as even a Western Park palace is to a *parvenu* who een passed and raised from the dirt of a cellar, or the of a garret, to the dizzy it, from which he now “gaze o'er half a world.”

I passed along the old ented streets and lanes led to the quarter I was seeking—though now r very different auspices y feelings were, of course, g and various. Of these, ver, I will not now c; it being sufficient to that whatever qualms pinchings of conscience have stolen upon me ected with antecedents,



sted to my memory by the scenes I now passed through, mediately rejected them, or fortified my mind against ; calling to my aid, in such process, others of a brighter e, such as those that I had latterly been enjoying in any with Tom Throstle, not to speak of the anticipated which he had promised me, and which were to eclipse rmer occasions.

at I had another matter, to think upon and divert my from old reminiscences, and that was, the negotiation h I was determined to enter into with my mother and ; regarding the “arrangement,” I hoped to effect, and the re of which I have already explained. With cash in and to give, I, of course, felt myself primarily armed, with promises of the same nature, for the future, I cted to arrive at my purpose quite to my satisfaction.

to how my mother would receive the proposition, I, aps, had my doubts, but in regard to Sissy I had none; although my ambition and base vanity had robbed her l my former affection and regard, I could not ignore in

my breast her simplicity of character, and ingenuousness of disposition, not to talk of all absence of selfishness, in her mind.

Turning over these ideas in my silly pate, I passed along, and soon stood opposite to the land of houses—as they term such a building in Scotland—the attics of which contained the humble apartment that had once formed my happy home.

The building, however, like the night, which was now advanced, looked gloomy and dull, notwithstanding the lurid glare of the ironworks in the district, there being scarcely a light to be seen gleaming, even from any of the windows of the numerous labouring families that inhabited the pile; and,



in particular, as I stood a few minutes to contemplate it at the garden fence, I remarked the darkness of the little window of my mother's portion thereof, which, on former occasions, when I was approaching it in the dark, had invariably been illuminated, either by the flickering of the fire, or by the beams of some

small bit of candle, which Sissy had placed on its sill, as a guide and welcome to me, and which intimated that there was reserved for me, on her part, a kind and warm reception.

Alas! it was now as dark as the grave, and, hardened although my heart was, I felt that circumstance disagreeable. It is true, I was not going to that dwelling with anything like the feeling of a visitor who appreciates a welcome, and therefore sets some value upon even the appearance of comfort, but still I could not disguise from myself, that if the "bield" had worn something of its former cheerful appearance, it would have been much more pleasant to me.

Such sentiments, however, I soon banished, and in a

minute after, I had mounted the rickety staircase that led to the door of my mother's apartment, at which, with my stick, I rapped with something like the air and importance of a sheriff's officer.

To my tapping, for some time, no attention was paid, and I was beginning to think that no one was within, so silent was everything—that silence being the more striking in consequence of the utter darkness in which I was involved,—when at last I heard a footstep, and a slight noise, as that, seemingly, of some person striking a light by means of a steel and flint.

After a little time, this surmise proved to be correct, for I now beheld a slight stream of light beaming from the chinks of the door, while, at the same time, the person within, withdrawing some bolts, which creaked considerably, slowly opened it.

Instead, however, of recognising, in the inhabitant of the place, the features of Sissy, as I had led myself to expect, or, at all events, of my mother, I beheld those of a tall, gaunt, beggarly-looking woman, grim with dirt, and very ill clad, who held a candle, stuck into the mouth of a bottle, before her face, while, with a hollow voice, that proceeded from her, as from a sepulchre, she demanded what I wanted; and, on my mentioning the name of my mother, with as respectable a title as I could give her, she simply shook her head, while she replied, "There's nane o' that name here, or has been, so far as I ken!"

With this information I was rather taken aback; and, indeed, I was scarcely inclined to credit her word, but that, on looking beyond her person, and into the recess of the room, I observed that there were none of the old, well-known articles of furniture within it, nor, indeed, any furniture at all; while, to my further queries, she declared she could give me no satisfactory answer, as she was a complete stranger



to the place, having only come there that day, as a tenant to an empty house. She, however, civilly enough referred me to other neighbours, and held the candle, so as to light me to their doors, before she shut her own.

There were plenty of such doors around that I might have applied at; but, not caring to enquire where I might likely be known, I descended the stair again, and proceeded to the house of my aunt, which was not far off, having reason to think that there, I would be sure to ascertain as to the whereabouts of my nearer relations.

On gaining my aunt's lodging, however, I found that an enormous change had likewise taken place there. Her house, in fact, was in the possession of another tenant, likewise, who told me that the poor woman had died ten days before, in great distress, and was now an occupant of the church-yard in the neighbourhood.

This person went on to inform me that my deceased relative had left very few effects—I having put some prudent and pertinent questions as to such a possibility—that the little she had left, after being turned into money, had barely sufficed to bury her; and that, previously to her death, she had parted with the most of her furniture and plenishing to support herself, my mother, and Sissy, the latter having likewise been reduced to great straits, and, indeed, as she expressed it, been “rouped to the door”—that is, had all their effects pointed and sold, to satisfy their landlord, to whom they were in arrears for rent.

What had become of my mother and sister, my informant could give me no account. They had, she said, left the place entirely, steeped in poverty and debt, and though well liked by the neighbours about, and having good characters, particularly Sissy, who was a general favourite, they had seemingly taken shame to themselves, on account of their difficulties, and retired to some other quarter, where they were comparatively unknown.

This information was, as may not be wondered at, rather “stunning” to me; and, as I retired from the place, and retraced my steps homewards, it set my ideas jarring against each other. I felt shame on one hand, and satisfaction on the other. I could not conceal from myself that I had, to some extent, been the cause of this melancholy result; while

I tried to persuade myself, at the same time, that I had only acted as others would have done, if placed in a like position to what I had been. As I walked along, remorse would occasionally seize me. Poor Sissy, starving and degraded, would rush to my mind; my mother, helpless and broken down in health, would torture my fancy—thus making my march homewards anything but a recreation. I half hoped that I would meet the poor wretches before I got well out of the neighbourhood, and yet I dreaded that such would be the case. I had a *quasi* benevolent feeling, on the one hand, to do what nature prompted to be right, and, on the other, an intensely selfish desire to ignore such altogether.

Looking back coolly upon myself, connected with that occasion, and judging dispassionately of my mind, as I would do that of a third person, I confess that I now view myself as having personified the very devil!

My consolation, however, is, that every day, many, very many, personify the devil, as I then did, with this difference, that they conceal the fact, not only from themselves, but from the world; whereas, I only conceal it from the latter, so far as my own identity is concerned: and I am constrained to do that; for where would the good, religious, benevolent, and respectable citizen—which, I flatter myself, I am considered—be, if I did not? But of that anon.

By the time I had reached my lodgings, where waited my good chum, Tom Throstle, to welcome me, as usual, I had settled to my satisfaction, as to my mother and Sissy. "I will be troubled no more by them," I said to myself; "they will think they can get nothing off me, and, therefore, will refrain from coming near me; for I think I can depend on my mother's pride, and Sissy's determination. Perhaps they will die," I ruthlessly went on to ruminate, "and then nothing will come" (to borrow Tom Throstle's quotation from Shakspeare) "betwixt the wind and my nobility!"

With these worthy sentiments in my breast, I entered the room, where I found Tom engaged with toddy and tobacco-pipes, and anxiously awaiting my coming, although I did not explain to him where I had been. A moment more, and I was engaged like him, in puffing, blowing clouds, and swilling, while he went on to post me up, as to the grand ball, which

was now all arranged, and destined to take place in about a fortnight; and towards which, he instructed me, I would do well to provide all sorts of dress and gay garnishments, so that I might successfully storm the heart of the lovely Miss Tucker, and effectually put to route the pretensions of the detestable M'Chuckie.



CHAPTER XXV.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

'Tis aptly said, "the course of true
Love never smooth doth run,"
Which means that, by our rivals, we
Are very often "done."

Alas! the sharpest, prickliest thorn,
Will lurk amongst the roses,
And what we least expected, will
Put out of joint our noses!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

THE period which lay betwixt my heart's desire and its realisation, namely, that of meeting at the subscription ball, which Tom Throstle so energetically had got up, the object of my idolatry, Miss Tucker, slowly passed away.

That estimable young lady had accepted my presentation of a ticket, which I had sent to her, enclosed in a nice gilt-edged card—the stationery portion of which alone cost me two-pence—and which was inscribed in my best hand-writing, with blue ink—that being at the time the most fashionable colour, used for such documents, amongst the aristocracy. This epistle I despatched to the address of Miss Tucker, by the hands of Messrs. Gunter, Slide, & Company's porter, I having by this time, been a few days in the employment of that firm, and whom I rewarded with a pint of ale and a pipe of tobacco, in consequence of his bringing me back an answer without having peeped into it.

The receipt of this latter document gave me particular pleasure. It was likewise written on gilt-edged paper, and with coloured ink, but unfortunately the former was only a half sheet of note paper, and confoundedly creased, soiled, and ill folded; and the latter *red* ink, which evidently she

had got from the desk of her employers. The grammar, too, was indifferent, although at that time I was no great judge of such literary niceties, and the spelling was abominable.

I, however, as I have said, received the note with great joy, while excusing the blemishes I have named, on the score that she, no doubt, had been wishful to return an answer as desired, "per bearer," and had taken the first means at her disposal, and as near what they should have been as possible, to do so, without stopping to bother herself with the tyrannical rules of Lindley Murray, or any other pedant.



I read this delightful note three times before showing it to Tom Throstle, who afterwards likewise read it more than once, and then commenced to analyse and criticise it favourably to my views. "She is evidently much impressed with you," he was pleased to say, "if not in love with you; for don't you observe that she actually uses the word 'pleasure' three times, and the word 'happiness' twice; although, confound it! she never spells

one of them alike, nor even right—the first pleasure being *minus* an *a*, the second having two *ee*'s, and the third spelt with an *z*; while happiness, in the one case, has only one *p*, and in the other only one *s*; however," he continued, while evidently determined that these slight mistakes should not prejudice her in my eyes, "you must not think anything of that, for it is likely she has had a bad pen, or the ink has been thick, which will account for it all!"

Whether the deficiency in stationery which Tom had suggested should have accounted for the errors he had pointed out, or not, I daresay I would not have thought the less of her; for there was a part of her note that made grammar or spelling of no importance whatever in my eyes, and that was expressed in two simple lines, namely, that "It would *do* her great plezur and hapines to dans the first danze with won she was so much obleeged to!"

"There my boy!" exclaimed Tom, as he read these words with a particular emphasis, "there is a declaration that

would put even a quaker in a twitteration, if he were addressed so. And as to M'Chuckie, why, if he knew of it, he certainly would go mad with jealousy and vexation!"

I was consequently doubly delighted, firstly in having gained Miss Tucker's favour so far, and secondly in having the prospect of triumphing over, and mortifying my gigantic rival, whom in my mind's eye I beheld broken down with melancholy, and on the verge of suicide.

I need hardly say that in anticipation of the forthcoming ball, I was not idle in making preparations both towards the adornment of my person, and the improvement of my manners. I spent all my spare cash, and at the same time took on a little credit, in procuring the neatest articles of dress that could be had. I likewise purchased a small book on the science of etiquette, which I studied profoundly, and which instructed me how to bow, and to smile, and to blow my nose better than other people did, indeed, in a way perfectly fascinating. In addition, I went to Monsieur Passeul's and got half-a-dozen lessons in waltzing, an accomplishment, which till then I had not acquired. With these preparations I felt myself to be perfectly fortified, and a thorough match for any rival that would dare to attempt to oust me in the good graces of Miss Tucker, not excepting the M'Chuckie himself.

During all this time, I may as well explain that notwithstanding the engrossing anticipations with regard to the ball which pervaded my mind, I did not neglect my duties at Messrs. Gunter, Slide, & Company's, whose establishment I had now become an active member of. On the contrary, although I myself say it, I was most attentive to my work there, and had reason to know that I was giving satisfaction to the heads of the firm. This circumstance I desire to take no credit for, for if I have any virtue, it is that of being a thorough business man, and from the first, I always took delight in following out the duties and routine of a counting-house. My employment, however, in Gunter, Slide, & Company's I found to be much more onerous than what I had been accustomed to in Silvertop & Company's, for they did an altogether different description of business, and an inordinate quantity of it, particularly when times were what are called "good," their operations principally consisting of purchasing

goods, and shipping them to foreign ports, where they had either branch houses of their own, or consignees; receiving, in return, produce from these countries, by ships arriving either in London, Liverpool, or Glasgow; and although, of course, I was put to a particular department of their operations, I was not long in busying myself with their other departments, partly from a morbid curiosity which I possessed for such matters, and partly from having, if I may be allowed to again speak favourably of myself, a general intelligence, not altogether common to youths, who seek employment in such establishments merely for a living.

So well did my superiors think of me, that I was, the very first week of my employment, entrusted to select small parcels of goods, at warehouses from which the firm bought, for shipment to foreign houses. These goods I was lucky in the choice of, both as regarded patterns and prices, and gained, in consequence, the commendation of Mr. Slide; while, at the same time, I was praised by Mr. Gunter for my assiduity at the desk. The latter gentleman could not but feel pleased, after he knew that I had been running about all forenoon, and part of the afternoon, too, from firm to firm, in quest of particular parcels of goods (only he did not know that I took the longest and most roundabout roads to accomplish this, so that I might have a chance of passing the shop door where the graceful Miss Tucker marched before the pier-glass formerly mentioned, showing off shawls, &c., or that of meeting, and lifting my hat to her, as she proceeded from said shop to her home, at the dinner hour) to see me sit down to my desk and begin to enter a note of the same in the proper book, and scribble away more attentively—seemingly—than any of the other clerks who had been in all day. It was my secret, and not his, however, that I had other matters besides those connected with the books, wherewithal to engage my pen. The fact is, I was deeply engaged in composing, no less than poetry, and that too, in the shape of a song addressed to Miss Tucker, which I proposed to myself, to sing on the occasion of the ball, about to take place—that is, at the supper connected therewith.

This was a bold step, and, I may add, an arduous one; for till now I had never paid any particular attention to

poetry, nor read much of it beyond the scraps that, here and there, pertained to the school books, and the exercises in writing, that were used at the seminary of Dominie Lickladdie.

Resolved, however, I was, on this occasion, to become a poet, and, for the purpose, I purchased, at a book-stall, situated not far from my ancient locality of the Goosedubbs, a rhyming dictionary, which furnished me with great facilities, and much assistance, in my literary endeavours, I being under the impression, like most young and ardent "followers of the nine," that rhyme and not reason, nor, indeed, sense at all, constituted real poetry.

And, perhaps, after all, I was not far wrong in this idea; for at this present day, the poets who seem to get on best, and make most money, are those whom one cannot understand a line of, while those whom you can comprehend are looked upon as being only second and third-rate bards, and remunerated accordingly.

With the assistance of my rhyming dictionary, and great perseverance, perhaps, too, if it must be confessed, by borrowing a little—or, as it is called, plagiarizing—from other poets, I managed to get up my song, and before the happy evening arrived, I had hummed and sung it twenty times to myself, and at least thrice to Tom Throstle, who pronounced it (he being a bit of a poet, too) a "work" of real merit, and particularly so, when considered as a first effort.



It was with even more trepidation and timidity, if not excitement, than on the former occasion, that I accompanied my friend Throstle at last to the Sheep's Head Hotel, in the large hall of which the grand subscription ball was destined to take place, and which was adorned for the occasion with great quantities of paper wreaths and coloured cotton drapery.

We were amongst the first arrivals, and, along with the Committee of Management, waited in the hall to welcome the guests as they came. I was delighted, in particular, to

observe that Mr. M'Chuckie entered the room alone, and not, as I feared would be the case, with Miss Tucker, who was amongst the latest arrivals, perhaps for the purpose of

creating a sensation, and in which she succeeded; for on stepping from the sedan chair, which I had sent for her, at the cost of eighteenpence, she did look even more superb and *distingué* than ever I had noticed before.



Of course, she kept her promise, and gave me her hand to the first dance, which was a set of quadrilles, and in which she danced even more gracefully than on the first occasion when I had the pleasure of

meeting her; for, having more space for display, she cut and pirouetted in a way that I feel impossible to describe, except by explaining that the point of her toe, on the occasion of one gyration, came so close to the countenance of a "near-sighted" gentleman, that, on starting back, his spectacles fell from his nose, and were almost dashed to fragments on the floor.

I had reason to think that my being honoured on this occasion by the lovely Tucker gave great pain to the M'Chuckie. As might have been expected, he was her second partner, and I daresay would have continued her entire partner for the whole evening, had the rules of the ball permitted.

This not being the case, Mr. M'Chuckie was not allowed to monopolise her to the same extent he had practised on the first occasion, and the consequence was, that not only I, but Mr. Throstle and others, had the felicity of dancing with her repeatedly afterwards, during the evening.

He was, however, cunning enough, by a master-stroke, to make up for this, and in a way that gave me much annoyance; for, when the supper was announced, and which was a matter that at the time had completely escaped me, so much had I been taken up by the dancing, he was seen scuttling away,

or, to use an Americanism, "skedaddling" with her under his arm to the apartment where that important collation had been laid, and where he got both himself and his Dulcinea snugly ensconced in a pleasant corner, where I could not get near them, particularly as a plain girl that I had been obliged to lead in, took it into her head to choose a seat away from, although opposite to them, and where I could only be rewarded by Miss Tucker with an occasional smile, as she devoted her attention to the feast that was now displayed before us.



This was inopportune, for it damped my spirits, and kept me from enjoying the good things which were provided, and which were on a scale of splendour and magnificence that I had never seen before; the fine set out of sweetmeats and pastry that furnished the table, reminding me of, and, at the same time, eclipsing, the redundantly-laid counter, in the same way, of the worthy Quaker's shop, which, till this moment, had always appeared, in my eyes, to be the realisation of what the preparation for a feast should be. What a display there now was, to be sure!—not a bit of the table, or, rather, the tablecloth, to be seen—so numerous and varied were the dishes, containing meats, jellies, pastries, ices, and fruits.

Of course, the sumptuous provisionings were done great justice to, and put every one into good spirits, particularly when the wine and punch-cups went their rounds, after the eatables had been discussed; and so much so was this the case, that the singing commenced much earlier than Tom Throstle remembered to have been the case, as he informed me, on any former occasion. Every one, indeed, seemed disposed to sing, whether ladies or gentlemen, and that, too, without much pressing—some even volunteering to sing their "staves" (as Tom expressed it) without being called upon. Miss Tucker, of course, sung.

Mr. M'Chuckie likewise sung. Tom Throstle sung a comic song, that created much laughter and applause, and a great many others sung. Indeed, so great was the warbling, and so numerous were the warblers, that I was at one time fearful that I would not get a chance of delivering the song I had prepared, with so much labour and assiduity, at all.

For that chance, indeed, which came at last, I was indebted to my friend Throstle, who, having sung his second song, immediately on finishing, addressed the company and said he would use the privilege which he now possessed, of calling upon a friend, whom he knew could favour the company with a ditty of his own composition, and having named me, not only as the minstrel, but the bard of the occasion, begged the attention of the company to what was about to follow.

I confess I never before felt such confusion as that which now came over me. My face was in a glow, and like scarlet, while, notwithstanding the quantity of wine and punch that I had imbibed to give me courage, I felt my heart quivering, and my head swimming.

I do believe I would have remained silent under such a severe ordeal, or broken down after I had commenced, had it not been for Tom Throstle, who was at my side, and who struck for me the key note, and promised to chime in with a bass or second if I should falter. I accordingly, although all eyes were turned upon me, and particularly those of Miss Tucker, took courage, and with the kindly prompting of Tom, delivered myself of the following, which I denominated "The Dirge of the Despairing One:"

Fair maid ! the happy fate is thine,
 In extacy to rove;
 But mine to drain the bitter cup,
 Of deep but hopeless love.
 Thy step is 'midst the bright and gay,
 The ball-room forms thy throne;
 While I, dejected and subdued,
 Am laxative and lone,
 Sweet love !
 Am laxative and lone.

I hear thee 'midst the happy throng,
 Where music holds its sway—
 I see thee carry with thy song
 The hearts of all away.

Away, away, and mine the first,
 Despairingly is gone;
 For both dejected and subdued,
 I'm laxative and lone,
 Sweet love!
 I'm laxative and lone.

Oh! who shall comfort him that dwells
 In sadness and in sorrow?
 He weeps to-day—he weeps to-night—
 He weeps likewise to-morrow.
 His eyes are like a streaming fount,
 His peace of mind is gone;
 While sadly he doth wander forth,
 So laxative and lone,
 Sweet love!
 So laxative and lone.

Come death! and quick relieve the woe,
 From which I cannot fly:
 Perchance *she* then may come to know
 My poignant misery.
 Ah! yes, 'tis better far to die,
 Than live to sigh and groan;
 For both neglected and subdued,
 I'm laxative and lone,
 Sweet love!
 I'm laxative and lone.

Glorious conceit! glorious ignorance! above all, glorious impudence! without these elements I never could have got through that song! Oh! how I have blushed since I came to know better, on thinking over what must have been the exhibition I made of myself, in delivering such execrable stuff!

Nevertheless, the company received my "lucubration" with great civility; very few of the ladies tittered, and, with the exception of the M'Chuckie, none of the gentlemen sneered, while not a few applauded, and one or two exclaimed *encore!* but not to such an extent as to warrant me in inflicting it again on the company. Indeed, I might have found some difficulty had I essayed to do this, for by this time many ladies and gentlemen had left for the ball-room again, where dancing was resumed with great vigour—the fiddlers and fifers having, in the meantime, been refreshed, as well as the gentry.

Mr M'Chuckie now broke through all constraint, and put

the rules which had been made by the committee, and till then respected, at complete defiance, while showing at the same time his extreme selfishness and impudence (at all events in my eyes), for, having led Miss Tucker back to the ball-room, he never let another individual beyond himself get a chance of dancing with her. And perhaps she was to blame a little in the matter herself, if one may judge from the sequel. He danced several sets of quadrilles with her, waltzed as often, and seemed determined to finish off, in the last country dance, which had been announced as the *finale*, likewise with her.

In consequence, I never got another chance; for, although I asked her, at least three times, to be my partner, she was always engaged—with her tale,—and I thought that, in refusing me, which was not altogether in a whisper, that I could see, by the glance and leer given by the M'Chuckie, that my disappointment gave him no small delight.

Tom Throstle, who likewise wished to dance with Miss Tucker, joined issue with me in deprecating such conduct, on the part of the M'Chuckie, and, indeed, made a formal complaint on the subject, to the Committee entrusted with the management of the ball; but these gentlemen, after laying their heads together, declined to interfere in the matter: assigning, as a reason, that as it was now after supper, and not long before the party would break up altogether, it would be a pity to run the risk of any quarrel taking place, and consequently we could get no redress.

I, however, got one lucky opportunity of squeezing her hand, and speaking to her confidentially, though briefly, when I took the opportunity of whispering into her ear, "Now, Miss Tucker, I expect you will allow me the pleasure and honour of seeing you home?" She did not say "nay," but gave something like a sigh, if not exhibiting a blush, while leaving me in perplexity and doubt; although, on the whole, I considered what she seemed to express thereby, a good omen as to my success, coupled with the fact that I had been the donor of her ticket, and had, therefore, an additional claim upon her generosity.

When the time, therefore, came for the ladies to array themselves in the walking dresses and stout shoes, in which they were to proceed home, I was duly at my post, waiting

the lobby, with the rest of the *beaux*, who were, like myself, bent upon conveying their partners or sweethearts home, who—as the dear creatures popped outwards, dressed in furs, or cloaks with hoods, the same making them rather indistinguishable, except to the sharp-sighted—stepped forward, and presenting their backs, vanished with their usual rapidity, into the darkness of the night.

Mr. M'Chuckie, as might have been expected, was amongst the aspirants, or over-claimants; but I fondly expected to cut him out by means of my activity, and the success I had made to Miss Ker, already mentioned.

At last she made her appearance, and, as luck would have it, in such a position



I had the golden opportunity of being first at her side, holding out my arm to her, at the same time, in the most obliging fashion. She did not, however, take it, as I expected she would have done, but seemed to be engaged in bustling with her cloak, while proceeding towards the door, and so onwards; but alas! with the vile M'Chuckie closely attending at her other side; and so we went on, in this awkward position for some time, no one speaking a word, and Miss Ker only tittering, while I was not sure whether or not I had taken the arm of my rival, M'Chuckie.

At last the latter seemingly could bear the contest no longer, for, leaving her side at the turn of a street, where the pavement was rather narrow, he suddenly threw himself across my path, and without giving me the least warning of what was about to follow, he hit me a most tremendous blow with his sledge-hammer of a "mawley," first on the right eye, then on the left one, following up the same, with a blow on the "conk," that made me feel as though that my head had become a pan-cake, while from it a plentiful stream of "the claret" ruddily flowed.

This was not even enough to satisfy the M'Chuckie's re-

venge, for, on clapping my hands to my face, to feel if my eyes were in, and nose on, and very naturally turning round so as to escape further blows, while so engaged, he saluted me with a certain description of ignominious kick, which set me a spinning, and at the same time, with a rap on the nape of the neck, that fairly brought me to all fours, amongst the mud.

This seemingly at last satisfied his enmity for the time, and determined him to do no more execution, for on looking up from my now humbled attitude of "all fours," with what of ocular ability that remained to me, I observed him, by the light of the waning moon, which was now beaming luridly in the east, stalking off, with his arm around the waist of Miss Tucker, who was flouncing furiously, while she merrily laughed, and unfeelingly exclaimed, "Impudent fellow: he has just got his *desarvings!*"



CHAPTER XXVI.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

In former days the custom was—
When injured by a fellow—
To call him out, and *pink* him off,
By process of *duello*.

But in these modern days, thank God!
There's no such custom known:
* So very prudent, wise, and good,
Society has grown!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

"IMPUDENT fellow, he has just got his *desarvings*!"—how that phrase rung in my ears, while these members seemed to grow and become elongated, as well they might, in keeping with the conviction which began to steal upon me, of the donkey I had become, not only in my own eyes, but in those of the individual that had been the means of bringing me into such a degrading position.

"And this is the reward of my devotion to this cruel maiden!" I exclaimed, as I gathered myself up from my knees and hands, which were all besmattered with mud, and vainly attempted, with my yellow silk handkerchief, fragrant with lavender—a perfume that ever since, has been peculiarly offensive to me, particularly at balls—to staunch the scarlet stream that trickled from my damaged probosis, "this is the result of my politeness and devotion; this is the return for the one pound eleven and six, that I have spent in tickets—not to mention what I have expended in silk socks, dancing pumps, kid gloves, and blue watch-ribbons—all for her sake!"

.Of course, sympathy is sweet, under any circumstances, so I sought my home, feeling certain that I would meet with

it there, and that, too, from my faithful friend, Tom Throstle. Accordingly, when I presented myself before him, as he sat, awaiting my coming, in a half undressed state, at our lodging—and where, in anticipation of a pleasant gossip, regarding the incidents of the ball, he had already laid out a supply of ale, whisky, hot water, and tobacco-pipes,—he was thunderstruck with my appearance.

Seizing a “mutton dip” which was burning on the table, and holding it close to my face, he shouted, “where, in the



name of Beelzebub, have you been? Have you been attacked by robbers, or have you had a row with the watch? Have you tumbled into a pit, or fallen into an area?—for you are the awfulest sight I ever beheld! Why, your eyes are both black and blue, the left one being completely sewed up, and the right one bloodshot, while your nose is both flat and swollen at the same time! Then, as to your clothes,” he went on to say, “why, your shirt-collar and breast-ruffles are torn and bedaubed with blood; your silk vest is rent, and your hat crushed; your ‘long-tailed blue’ besmeared, as if by a paint-brush! Tell me, man, how this has happened, and who has done it?”

“Done it!” I at last replied, as I sank exhausted on a chair, “the devil has done it! Miss Tucker has done it! M’Chuckie has done it! Oh! Tom, I am the victim of deceit! of revenge! of cruelty! of barbarity! of jealousy! and of misplaced confidence!”

I then went on more coolly, and with less declamation, to give a succinct account of what had happened, during which narration, I divested myself of my soiled garments for a *deshabille* suit, while assisted by Tom, who brought me hot water from the kitchen (Mrs. Gusset having gone to bed), with which I bathed my damaged orbs, and nasal protuberance, and which, in consequence of said lavation, although still looking bad, began to feel less painful.

"The rascal!" exclaimed Tom, as I brought my account of the *melée* to a close, "the vile, cowardly, six-foot-three-inch, knave! the sixteen stone bully! the long-armed monster! —to strike a comparatively little fellow like you, in such a way—and so much younger, too, and but half his weight—and in so stealthy and fox-like a manner: why, the scoundrel deserves hanging!"

"But I'll put you up to a way of getting ample revenge on him," continued Tom, as he imbibed a long and hearty swig of the ale, and then blew clouds of tobacco smoke from his mouth in successive puffs, like volleys from the port-holes of a line-of-battle ship, "I'll instruct you how to bring his pride down, and make him far lower than you were amongst the mud even! And guess how that will be managed?"

"By lodging an information against him at the police office, and having him taken up upon a charge of assault and battery?" replied I.

"No!" emphatically answered Tom, "that would never do; for the chances are that he would make a counter charge against you, and so turn the tables in his favour. But, besides, how could you prove it, for you have only one witness, namely Miss Tucker, and more than likely she would go against you instead of him? No! no!—that would never do;—guess again?"

"Well," I said, "I confess I am rather puzzled what further I should guess. I presume you would not have me to put the case into the hands of a lawyer for the purpose of raising an action, with the view of obtaining damages off him?"

"By no means," replied Tom, "for under such circumstances you would be just in the same predicament as if you had, as you proposed, made a police case of it, in regard to witnesses. Besides, I look upon this matter more as an affair

of honour, than of damages—it being connected with love, and there is a lady in the case!”

“What then do you propose,” I inquired,—“to place myself in a quiet corner some night, and attack him with bludgeons or a horse-whip from behind, when he is not expecting anything of the kind?”

“That would be worse than all,” said Tom in reply, “for being a strong fellow he might wrest the weapon out of your hand and belabour you within an inch of your life with it; besides it would not be honourable warfare!”

“But I’ll tell you what should be done,” continued Tom, as he strode towards his chest, which stood in a corner of the

room, and dived into its interior, “I’d have you to try him with a small touch of the *duello*, and these are the instruments for the purpose!”

As he said this, he placed upon the table a pair of rusty horse, or holster pistols, with barrels of about ten inches in length, and having flint locks, and which, after giving me a few minutes to sur-



vey them, he took up again, and after cocking them, snapped them so as to make the sparks fly from their locks in a truly awful manner.

“These,” he went on to say, “are your true equalizers of strength, in the combat where beauty is concerned, and place men of honour upon a par with all who have any claim to civilisation or chivalry! With one of these in your right hand, and the other in that of the giant M’Chuckie, and twelve paces betwixt you: why, strength—that is mere vulgar, brute strength—is as nothing! It is moral strength, and moral strength alone, that then tells!”

I sat gazing, in silence, and amazement, perhaps with a

little admiration, mixed with horror at Tom, as he delivered these doughty sentiments, and wondering what would be the result, while he went on to eulogize and commend what he denominated "the institution of the *duello*." But, I confess, I did not relish the subject at all. I had heard of such things as duels, it is true; that is to say, I had read of them in newspapers, it being quite a common thing at that period for gentlemen to go out, for the most trivial causes, particularly if these were connected with love or politics; and, therefore, it was no unusual thing to read in the newspapers that on such and such a day an "affair of honour"—as it was called—had taken place, wherein "Mr. Blank, attended by Mr. Blank as his second, had met Mr. Blank, attended by Mr. Blank as *his* second," when, "after an exchange of shots, the parties had come to a satisfactory explanation," or "understanding," or some thing or other, much better than a ball through the heart, or a "bullet in the thorax," and had left the ground "perfectly reconciled."

Sometimes the parties were interrupted, on reaching the ground, by the Sheriff of the County, who bound them over to keep the peace, when the happy dogs walked off, of course much obliged to the Sheriff for his interference, although pretending to be greatly annoyed thereat. Sometimes one party fired and missed, while his opponent discharged his pistol in the air; but I never remembered to have read of any casualty having happened to any of the individuals concerned, far less a death, which said much for the good luck of the combatants. No doubt, fatal cases did occur, but I knew of none connected with the West Country, and particularly with my much beloved native City, where the inhabitants are as bellicose and brave, as any others, bearing the title and possessing the pride of Scotsmen.

Notwithstanding these bloodless facts, connected with duelling, I did not respond to Tom's admiration of this manner of settling "gentlemanly differences," as he called them, in a way that met his approval; and it was not, therefore, until I had imbibed a considerable quantity of ale, and smoked at least a couple of pipes, that I would consent to entertain the idea at all. Dutch courage, however, by that time, having begun to obtain sway over me, coupled with a hint from Tom that, if I comported myself

bravely, I might still effect a conquest of Miss Tucker's heart, particularly if M'Chuckie were afraid to meet me—of which Tom had no doubt—when I would be at liberty to post him as a coward, I began to look upon the proposal more favourably; and, before turning into bed, I had written a challenge to the M'Chuckie, dictated by Tom, and had authorised the latter to wait upon my foe the next morning—or rather the same morning—for the purpose of bringing him to book.

That being settled, we retired to our respective cribs, Tom to sleep soundly, as his heavy snoring indicated was the case, and I to toss and tumble in feverish agony—partly from the pain which I suffered in my nose and eyes, and partly from the dread I felt that possibly the M'Chuckie would shoot me, or failing which, that I would shoot him, and ultimately expiate my crime before the Court House portico, even as my respected stepfather and the lamented Barney had done theirs, as has already been honourably recorded.

So much did the very possibility of either horrible result act upon my feelings, that I resolved to withdraw from Tom the authority I had given him to challenge M'Chuckie, and as I felt sleep entirely banished from my eyelids, I lay watching for the moment when he should awake, to put this resolution into execution. Unluckily, however, I fell asleep myself, and, when I awoke, I found that Tom was off, no doubt to carry out what I now, of all things, deprecated and shrunk from.

I waited impatiently for his coming back, during which painful period I could not help representing to myself that Tom had evinced rather a prompt desire to bring about this "affair of honour," as he called it, and I, consequently, had almost a mind to abstract from his chest—which I observed he had left open—the pistols he had exhibited the night before, and hide them in some cunning nook, where they would not be found again till the affair had blown over. But this idea I abandoned as one that would not work. I then thought of giving a quiet hint myself about the meeting to the Master of Police, so that he might arrest us both, as well as M'Chuckie, but this, likewise, I saw objections to. And at last I came to the resolution of leaving the affair to Providence!

Having nothing, however, particular to do in the meantime, I surveyed my countenance in the glass. My nose I found was not so bad as I expected it would have been, but my teeth felt loose, while my eyes were shockingly discoloured, there being on both of them not only blue circles, but yellow ones, which gave me quite a black-guard appearance, and which I thought would not altogether suit the atmosphere of Gunter, Slide, & Company's establishment.

While I was wondering what I should do under the circumstances, Tom suddenly burst into the room, holding a handkerchief to his face, while he exclaimed, "By Jingo! he is a fearful fellow, that M'Chuckie; and he shows a pluck and determination that I never expected!"

This announcement greatly alarmed me, for I considered it an intimation that my doom was sealed, and that the handkerchief applied to Tom's eyes, was to stop the tears that, of course, flowed for my fate.

A moment, however, served to relieve me from this fresh anguish, for, on Tom removing the handkerchief from his face, I found that he was in as bad a plight as myself: that is, that both his eyes were likewise black and blue, and his nose almost flattened, or at all events, considerably inflamed. To be explicit, and come to the point at once, it turned out that Tom had waited on M'Chuckie at his house, or rather that of his mother—which, as Tom described, was a flat situated at the top of a common stair; that on rapping thereat, the door of said house had been opened by Mrs. M'Chuckie herself, who had gone to call her son (on learning that an important letter was to be delivered by the bearer's own hands) who was still in bed; that Mr. M'Chuckie had there and then arisen, and come to the door, seemingly not in the best of humours, for being disturbed so early; that he had read the letter; that he had torn it into



a hundred pieces, and thrown them in Tom's face; that he had then given him a couple of thumps upon the eyes and nose, and had ultimately discharged him with a kick *au derriere*, that had sent him spinning, from the top of the stair to the bottom, while he scarcely knew whether his head or his heels were uppermost!



Tom went on to say, that on recovering his senses, which he had considerable difficulty in doing, a vast number of ideas had crossed his mind as to what he should do in regard to this furious monster: from calling in the aid of the police, to challenging him on his own account; but seeing difficulties connected with all these projects, he had at last resolved to come direct

home, so that we might lay our heads together as to what should be resolved upon.

And we did lay our heads together, and a pretty pair of heads they appeared to be, after the gratuitous pommelling, and painting, and burnishing, they had respectively got from the M'Chuckie!

As we gazed at our damaged physiognomies in the cracked looking-glass, we were alternately angry and sad at the appearance we made, but it ended as it should do: we uncontrollably burst into a roar of laughter at our lacrimose and ridiculous appearances, and this brought us to something like our senses. We now saw that M'Chuckie had befooled us, and gained a complete victory over us, to attempt to upset which, by any course, like what we proposed to follow, was out of the question.

On my part, too, I must confess, I now felt a secret satisfaction that things had come to the issue they were at. In the first place, I felt relieved, in respect that I would not require to turn out in the duelling way, and expose myself to the chance of cold lead making a hole through my body. In the second, I felt gratified that Tom's rather gratuitous attempt, to place me in an unenviable position, should have

recoiled on himself; and, in the third, I felt consoled, because I was not alone a sufferer.

It was, therefore, with something approaching to pleasure—at all events, it was with extreme resignation—that I agreed to join Tom in becoming a prisoner to the house for a day or two, in order that we should assist each other in the cure of our wounds, or rather blemishes, and as this involved the necessity of our assuming a recumbent position and being very quiet, with raw beefsteaks applied to our eyes, with the kind assistance of excellent Mrs. Gusset, who proved to be a capital nurse, we consequently became to each other, respectively, objects of great sympathy and interest.



CHAPTER XXVII.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

How oft 'tis stated that success
Attends the man of pluck ;
When, on enquiring, it appears,
'Tis only his good-luck !

The Goosechubbs Poet.

It took the best part of a week before my eyes had regained their former healthy appearance, so as to permit me to resume my duties at Gunter, Slide, & Company's, creditably and decently.

This *hiatus* might have been of serious consequence to me, only, luckily, what time had been consumed thus uselessly, had formed part of the fast, or preaching week—an usual half yearly occurrence, dear to clerks, “counter-lowpers,” and shopkeepers—and consequently my absence was not much noticed, particularly as both Mr. Gunter and Mr. Slide had themselves been away from business—the one having gone to Manchester, and the other to the north, during these holidays—and I, therefore, had only to report myself to an upper clerk, who was easily satisfied with my explanation.

Moreover, I was the first of the establishment at work on the Monday morning after the “preachings,”—having for the purpose had to rouse up the porter who kept the keys of the office, so early as six o'clock, and for which piece of activity that official did not thank me,—consequently, by the time the others made their appearance, I was completely up with my work, and comparatively all right.

It is true, that if a critical eye had inspected my visage,

s of my late *rencontre* might have been visible; but art and tact had come to my assistance; for some slight as of blue and yellow in neighbourhood of my ds that remained, were artistically painted by

Throstle, respectively French whitening and e, that almost defied de- on, while to put danger ely out of reach, when one came near me, I d my nose into my s in a furor of at- veness that doubly did ce to me.

saw that this preten- industry had good ef- with Mr. Slide, and that I was becoming a favourite with and gradually and decidedly getting into his confidence. solved, therefore, to comport myself with propriety, to lose no opportunity of fostering his good graces to- ls me.

nd in more ways than one, perhaps, I was entitled to , seeing that for upwards of six months subsequently, I ired late and early for the benefit of my employers, ecting nothing, and shrinking from nothing, in the way y duties.

course, this was fully put down to my credit by the but it was not altogether from disinterested motives, all, that I had done what had led to this.

ie fact is, that—whatever I might be in love, or in ure, or, it may be, in dissipation—in business, I was ool. I had all my wits about me in Gunter, Slide, Company's; and, with a never-failing ambition, I determined that these wits should serve my purpose ssible.

had made a little discovery, to be plain, that I calculated, ell acted upon, might turn out to my advantage, and it ly was this:—In prying, with my wonted *laudable* sity, into matters connected with the business, and, of



course, shutting my eyes to nothing of a written nature, I discovered, amongst the general letters, that lay on our corresponding clerk's desk, a duplicate note from the partner of one of our South American houses, that referred to a private letter which had been sent to Mr. Slide, and this struck me presciently as being something that might bear on my fate.

And I was not wrong in this surmise, for, on poking my hand into the pocket of Mr. Slide's greatcoat, which he had hung against the door of his private room, previously to his going down to the reading room, as was his usual, and from the window of which private room I could see him as he progressed along the street, I therein discovered the letter alluded to.



To read it, and digest its contents, was the work of a moment, and these I found to be of the deepest interest to me. The letter expressed the

regret of the writer that Mr. Slide had not yet fallen in with some young man or other, sufficiently acquainted with goods, whom he could send out to the said South American establishment, to replace a clerk who still held therein the office of salesman to the natives, and as that clerk, notwithstanding a heavy advance in salary that had been offered to him, was determined to return home in the fall, he hoped that a substitute might be found for him without delay.

The letter then went on to point out what the qualifications and abilities of the clerk required, should be, and, in my conceited imagination, so thoroughly described myself as the *desideratum*, that I immediately felt as if I were already invoiced, packed up, and booked for exportation to the locality.

With regard to emigrating, the idea pleased me vastly: the salary that the foreign partner named as the worth of a good clerk, in that country, being far beyond what was given here, and, consequently, the latter *now* appeared, in my eyes, as being a perfect starvation wage.

Having replaced the letter in Mr. Slide's pocket, I

forthwith gave vent to my fancy, and, as usual, commenced to build castles in the air of an inordinate degree. In my imagination, I had Mr. Slide almost on his knees soliciting me to accept the office, while I cautiously and cunningly bid him up and up, till I not only obtained a fabulous salary, but a partnership, leading to a gigantic fortune. Tom Throstle, whom I, of course, made a confident of, in the matter, fanned the flame, and consequently we smoked an immense quantity of tobacco, and quaffed a proportionate supply of ale on the head of it. Altogether, I was in a delirium of joy, modified and controlled, however, by the provoking circumstance that, although I toiled harder and more attentively at my duties than I had ever done before—purchasing goods at prices so low that Mr. Slide stared with wonder, and of patterns so tastefully chosen, that he smiled with delight—he never spoke a word on the subject so dear to my heart.

This circumstance was perplexing, and seriously taxed the ingenuity both of Tom Throstle and myself to account for it, when one day, at last, the true facts of the case oozed out, and plunged us both into sadness.—Tom, he it observed, having made up his mind, that if I got this situation, I, on getting abroad, would soon procure a similar situation for him, either in the same house, or another of like standing. It turned out, alas! that Mr. Slide had fixed upon another young man altogether, namely, a clerk in a neighbouring house with which we did a considerable deal of business. This young man I had daily been in the habit of meeting in his employer's warehouse, when I flattered myself I could "turn him round my little finger"—meaning thereby, that I was a better man of business than he.

I need not say that I felt much mortified at this appointment, and was inclined, in consequence, to adopt Tom Throstle's view of Mr. Slide's reasons for having made it, as being extremely selfish. Tom also thought that I had overdone the matter; indeed, that I had worked too hard for Gunter, Slide, & Company, and had made myself so extremely useful and necessary to them, on this side of the Atlantic—and that, too, at a bare salary—that they could not spare me for the other side—particularly at a high one!

As for the lad himself, of course, from that day I detested

him. I looked upon him as having come betwixt me and my interest—as having taken the tit-bit out of my mouth, and as having been my successful rival, in a commercial point of view—even as M'Chuckie had been, in that of a love one.

And, talking of M'Chuckie, his success formed another element of unhappiness to me—a success which I may as well now mention at once. He actually married Miss Tucker, and transferred her from the saloon of Tweel, Braid, & Company—much to the annoyance of that firm, one of the partners thereof being, it was said, himself an admirer of her—to the back of his mother's late counter, but now his own, in consequence of the retirement from business, in his favour, of the worthy hen-wife, where she (*i.e.* young Mrs. M'Chuckie) was occasionally to be seen



handing to the customers of the shop, the trussed corpses of turkeys, ducks, and chickens, whose necks she had perhaps "*thrown*" the night before. So said Tom Throstle, who reported to me the circumstance; for, as to myself, I never could muster as much courage as to pass near the place, from a dread of the heartache which I felt the sight would unmistakably give me.

I need scarcely say, that in consequence of these disappointments, I became quite a changed man, and perhaps for the better; for I now comported myself at the office of Gunter, Slide, & Company's less pragmatically and uppishly than before, though still paying sufficient attention to my duties, to command the regard of Mr. Slide, who seemed to think as much of me as ever.

At last I got over the disappointment, and was beginning to be reconciled to my fate, and the necessity of working out my engagement of three years with Gunter, Slide, & Company—while keeping, at arm's length, from my imagination, the hap-

piness of Mr. and Mrs. M'Chuckie, who had now been married some three months—when, one day, I was startled and amazed by seeing the young man who had sailed for South America, and been gone about six weeks, make his appearance at the office, in a woe-begone state, to enquire for Mr. Slide, who was as much surprised at the apparition as I had been—he having supposed that, by this time, he was half-way across the Atlantic.

It turned out that the poor young fellow had met with misfortunes after he had sailed. The ship in which he went had encountered baffling winds in the Channel, and had been obliged to put into a port of refuge, where she lay at anchor for ten days. She had afterwards got a fair wind to run down St. George's Channel, but, after getting clear of the land, she had encountered a southerly gale, which dismasted her, and drove her back upon the south-west coast of Ireland, where she was lost, along with half of her crew—the other moiety and himself—the only passenger—having been saved, but not their personal baggage, which all went down with the ship.

The poor lad went on to say, that he had suffered many hardships after landing in Ireland, and had experienced the greatest difficulty in getting home again, having travelled partly by land, and partly by inferior sailing packets—a coasting steamer, in those days, being quite an exotic,—and here he was at last home again, with nothing but his life and the clothes on his back, heartily tired and disgusted with the sea.

It was with no small mortification, after the lad had brought his melancholy narration to a conclusion, that I heard Mr. Slide coolly propose, that he should again prepare for prosecuting his voyage, in another vessel that he said would sail in about a couple of months,—for, during the recital, I had made up my mind that, at last, my chance had come,—and more so, when he tried to overcome his scruples, by telling him, that he did not know where he could get another, suitable for taking his place, if he refused to go.

“No other to be got, suitable for the place!” I inwardly exclaimed to myself, “and the very individual standing before him! well, after that ——!”

But here my self-communings were interrupted by the

young man continuing to express his protestations against the proposal, with the following accompanying explanation:—He said that from the very first he had misgivings about accepting the handsome offer made to him by Mr. Slide, and but for his having entered into the engagement, and pledged himself thereby, in the first attractive view he had of the matter, he would have declined it, for the simple reason, that he had an old mother and a feeble sister entirely dependent upon him for their maintenance, and who had been sadly grieved, and rendered lonely, by his departure, although, from the liberal terms of Gunter, Slide, & Company, he was well able to provide for them in his absence—only, however, if he kept his life and his health; for, failing these, all would then be lost! He had, in the face of these facts, sailed in the vessel that was lost, but all the time he had felt the responsibility of the step lying deeply on his conscience, and indeed he felt that the shipwreck had been a just punishment for it. Under these circumstances he hoped Mr. Slide would excuse him, particularly as he thought he might get some other one, and that one, perhaps, connected with his own office, who would be far better suited for the situation than he was, and who, especially, had no mother and sister depending upon him, whose hearts he would break by deserting them.

As he said this, he cast a glance at me—it might have been an accidental one—but such as it was, it went to my conscience, and likewise to my heart, for it was half-divided in its effects, upon my natural feelings, and my ambitious disposition; and, therefore, while it was, as it were, a thrust into the one, it acted as a balm to the other. I blushed deeply, both from remorse and selfishness, which Mr. Slide noticing, no doubt put it down to the credit of my modesty; for, after discharging the young man, in the meantime, with a promise that he would think over what he suggested, he immediately asked me, if I thought I would suit the situation, to which pertinent and pleasant question, I answered, that I would take the matter into my serious consideration, and let him know in a day or two!

He commended me for adopting this moderate mode of procedure; named the terms upon which he would recommend me to his partner for the appointment—which were

indeed the same as those that had been held out to the other young*man, and advised me to consult with any friend that could give me advice on the subject.

And of course I did this: the friend, as usual, being Tom Throstle, whose advice I need scarcely say was to accept what was offered—or, in other words, to do what I had predetermined myself. The consultation, therefore, although prolonged, was remarkably harmonious—the principal topics that were discussed, being inflated dreams of ambition, over Havannah cigars and blood-red wine, instead of, as on former occasions—coarse cut-tobacco in clay cutties, and Edinburgh *yill*!



CHAPTER XXVIII.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

"Parting's sweet sorrow," so the poet says—
Yet very melancholy, many think—
Indeed, it is no better than 'tis called,
If 'twere not for the farewell feast and drink!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

ON the morrow I acquainted Mr. Slide that I would be happy to accept his offer, and, in due time, be prepared to proceed in the vessel that was appointed to sail to the port in South America, where was situated Gunter, Slide, & Company's house, of which I expected to become an important official.

But though Mr. Slide was willing enough to confirm this proposed appointment, I found, to my consternation, from what he explained to me, that there were great difficulties in the way. Mr. Gunter, it seemed, took an altogether different view from his partner, of the matter. He considered me perfectly inexperienced, and, though clever enough, too young for such a responsible position. He, therefore, thought that I should continue as I was, and serve out my original engagement of three years, when, "*perhaps*, the idea might be entertained."

This was a severe staggerer to me, and one which perplexed and subdued both the minds of myself and Tom Throstle, notwithstanding the consolation we sought in a return to sweet ale and black cutties—port wine and cigars being once more out of our reach.

Still hope did not desert me, for although I knew that

both Mr. Gunter and Mr. Slide were again making research for a suitable person, and even trying to shake the affectionate determination of the young man whom they had formerly been engaged with, and whose reverence for the Fifth Commandment was so much in contrast to mine, I trusted in my good luck—an element which, I may state, although occasionally apparently deserting me, yet, on the whole, did me often great service, and greatly supported me through life, as already has been told in the foregoing narration, and will afterwards be referred to in the sequel.

That good luck did come to my aid, and in a way I least expected; for, one day, who should pop into our office but Mr. Bracepiece, to *beg* back my services again, if they could be spared, in consequence of a change having suddenly occurred connected with *his* business, which made it necessary for him to procure the assistance of a clerk upon whom he could depend. This brought the affair at once to an issue. Mr. Slide went immediately to Mr. Gunter, who, in talking the matter over with him, saw that if he did not appreciate me, others did, and that went a great length in changing his views. He, therefore, gave in, and Mr. Slide returned to me smiling, to report that I was appointed positively to the place.

I felt, however, lowered in my own estimation, by the manner in which I had been subjected to criticism, and depreciated, and turned inside out, as it were, like a piece of the goods I myself was daily in the habit of negotiating purchases of, before accepting as a bargain. I saw, indeed, that I was nothing but an item of commerce, and although I might now be on the high road to greater preferment, that I was, nevertheless, only valued according as such "stock" was rare or plentiful in the market. Had Messrs. Gunter, Slide, & Company, I said to myself, been able to serve themselves cheaper, or better, or more readily otherwise, they never would have cast into my scale the slightest weight of favour, but just have placed me aside for a more suitable article in these respects; so true is the aphorism of the philosophical merchant, that "there is no friendship in business!"

"No friendship in business!"—how true, this one will perhaps exclaim, who has struggled through the thorns of a

commercial career, to arrive, at last, at old age—or rather, premature old age—with nothing a-year to live upon—

“Then age and want, ah! ill-matched pair,
Tell man was made to mourn!”

“How false!” however, may that one, who is enjoying the happy illusion of primary good luck, be heard asseverating to the contrary. “Why!”—the latter will very possibly continue,—“look but around, and you will see, every day, hundreds of illustrations, proving what I aver! Do you not see fat Mr. Twist, the spinner, dining with, and giving dinners to, sleek Mr. Longstaple, the cotton broker, at least once a month? And where will you meet Mr. Druggier, the dry-salter, and his wife, Mrs. Druggier, so often as at the elegant table of Mr. Madder, the turkey-red dyer?—all in consequence of their business friendships!

“And then, what glorious dinners they give!—what hospitality!—what anxious inquiries after the respective little ones of each!—what hilarity!—what friendly shaking of hands when they meet!—what kindly wishes when they part!—and does this not prove that there is friendship, and real friendship, too, in business?”

“All a mere part of an inflated idea!” more than likely the disappointed controversialist will rejoin. “All a matter of debit and credit, and having nothing to do with friendship at all!—all as unreal as the joke over a negotiation in the counting-house, or the smile over a bargain in the sale-room! Let any one of these *dear friends*,” he will perhaps continue, “change but his business connection, and become a customer to others, and the locality of the dinners will change too—the warm grasp of the drawing-room will become the dry nod of the street; yea, the highest regard will be transferred into the cut direct. Let him, however, change his position in this way:—Let him lose his money—let him fail—let him require to ask the aid of his *quondam* entertainer, and what then? Alas! all these happy and hospitable scenes become a vision of the past! He then finds that respect dwindles down to contempt; that poverty is a crime; that friendship in business, in a word, is a myth!”

I now began to prepare for my voyage, towards which I got an advance from my employers, and by the time the ship

was ready for sea, I had all my books written up, my successor instructed as to my mode of procedure, in the selecting and purchasing of goods, and everything put on a footing to enable me to leave with credit, the department I had conducted on this side of the globe.

At the same time, I commenced to suffer the throes and regrets of parting—anomalous although such amiable sensations may appear to have been in one, who has written himself down as being so extremely selfish and unfeeling a person. Still I did feel these.

And after all, perhaps, it was the extreme of selfishness that made me thus suffer. I had so much self-love within me, that I felt it would be undignified if I should go without being regretted, and, therefore, I yearned to be in the reciprocal mood of regretting.

But here the question arose within my breast: "To whom should my regrets extend?"—and along with that, mortifying answers—"To Miss Tucker?"—"She cares not a pin point for me!—she never did!—and even if she did, is she not the wife of another—aye, even of the M'Chuckie?"—"To any of the numerous young ladies whom I used to meet at vulgar dancing parties, and with whom I pedantically flirted, and sentimentalised?"—"Not one of these remembers me beyond the ephemeral occasions of our meetings, more than she does the oranges, and tarts, and cheese-cakes that engaged her affections as much as I did, on these evenings!"

And thus I went on, cudgelling my brains for an idea that would administer to my egoism, and at last I hit upon one that brought my heart to my mouth, and the blood to my cheek!

"To my mother and poor Sissy?" I involuntarily said to myself; and then I suffered one of those mental struggles wherein men will debate for, and against themselves so ingeniously, and yet so severely, that philosophers can only account for the phenomenon, by asserting that there exists a duality of the brain, the lobes on one side being moral, or revengeful, or vindictive, or furious, as the case may be, and on the other side the reverse, and thereby is constituted conscience, which, as Shakspeare says, "doth make cowards of us all!"

Of course, in this self-constituted court, as might be expected, the trial was a tough one, and as I sat at the bar of my own breast, with my elbows on the table, and my brow on my hands, and alternately listening to the debate of counsel on each side, the ordeal could not but be severe.



I was, however, before a verdict could be returned, aroused from my reverie, by Tom Throstle, who came from his engagements sooner than usual,

to spend, in jollity, the last remaining evening I was to pass in my native city, before leaving for the other side of the "herring pond," as he was pleased to denominate the Atlantic, with his usual happy facetiousness.

And a pretty fair sort of night in that way we did pass. Tom intended that we should be alone, so that we might have as much private intercourse as possible, without being intruded on by any one. We accordingly talked over old matters, and new ideas; old loves, and new attractions; old hopes and new expectations, and so on. We likewise sung our old songs, and flattered each other—Tom, in particular, being very good at that sort of thing—for I believed him, when he assured me that there would be many wet eyes amongst the fair sex of our acquaintance, when they learned that I was "o'er the seas and far away!"

Tom then ordered a "bit of supper," which Mrs. Gusset with her own hands brought in; and so plentiful, and nicely cooked was it, that we could not help asking her son, Nahum, to come and partake of it, along with us.

This he favoured us by acceding to, and I was glad of the circumstance, for Mrs. Gusset had proved to be a very good landlady, while I dwelt in her house, and the said Nahum had been a very quiet and unobtrusive neighbour at the same time.

I had seen little of the latter, beyond meeting him in the passage, and occasionally on the stair, as he passed in and out, he having been principally engaged during the evenings

in teaching gentlemen's sons, as a private tutor, at their own residences, and, in the day time, in attending his studies at the College, as a theological student, in which he had been so successful, that he had managed to pass the Presbytery, and obtain a license as a preacher, having, in his trial sermons, before that reverend body, acquitted himself, according to report, sonorously, solemnly, and orthodoxically, as indeed his physiognomy, to any one, might have told, would have been the case.

The appearance of the reverend Nahum, as he stalked into the room, with his tall, gaunt body, dressed in rusty black habiliments, and almost reaching from the floor to the roof: while his lanky hair fell around his shoulders in long straight and dank locks, rather threw a shade of control over Tom Throstle and me, but, at the same time, it added respectability to the occasion, particularly when he inaugurated the supper with a long and nasally emphasised grace, in the course of which he occasionally opened one eye, to view, as it were, the "mercies" lying on the table, and for which he was expressing gratitude.



And, indeed, he showed his gratitude in a further and more substantial way besides; for, tripe, "finnan haddies," and sausages, vanished before him in a most appreciable style, washed down, as they were, with gulps of Edinburgh ale that might have floated a salmon, and a dram that might have preserved it from decay for a fortnight, only that, instead of being for the preservation of the discussed viands, the reverend Nahum declared, in the only words he spoke during the repast, that "it was merely for the sake of digestion!"

But if the worthy gentleman was silent during supper, he made up for that by a most monopolising loquacity afterwards, preliminarised, as it was, by an after-grace—denomi-

nated in Scotland "returning thanks," that perfectly threw into the shade the "blessing before meat." It was something betwixt a prayer and a speech, for it ranged from the solemnity of the one to the generality of the other, in a way



that only reverend gentlemen, and particularly Presbyterian ones, can practise; while, as a display of the kind, it was perfect.

He first thanked Providence for the bountiful "table that had been spread in the wilderness." He then prayed that it might be attended with a blessing, and continued from day to day; indeed, he craved that "our store might be increased, and that our cup

should overflow!" After this rather superabundant demand, he diverged to "the occasion that had brought us together." "It was one," he said, "of love and affection—of Christian feeling and kind wishes, in which nothing like selfishness intruded; but, on the contrary, pure benevolence, and self-denial. 'Its purposes,' he continued, "were, in a general way, to express the bitter sorrow that those present felt in losing the society of one who was endeared to them by so many tender recollections, and pleasant occasions of intercourse, and, in a particular one, to wish him success in the new field that was spread before him, for exercising the virtues and talents that he possessed!" He then parenthetically prayed that my voyage might be prosperous, while alluding to the dangers encountered by those who "go down to the sea in ships," and from that he at once sprung to the beauties of the sunny lands and halcyon climate of the New World, whither "our interesting friend was directing his steps and attention."

The locality at which the Rev. Nahum Gusset had now arrived, seemed to promise an interminable field for his "solemn communings," which was rather annoying to Tom Throstle; for I observed, on casting my eyes towards him,

that he was screwing his mouth and shrugging his shoulders in despair.

I was delighted, however, to observe, at the same time, that Mrs. Gusset, although showing proper and discreet respect towards the pious ejaculations of her reverend son, was not altogether allowing useful time to be thrown away; for, while the one "pronounced," the other, slipping quietly, and on tip-toe, placed on the table the implements necessary for the usual constitutional tippie that should always follow a good supper, and which reverend gentlemen respect as much as most folks do. Mrs. Gusset, no doubt, placed them on the table, on this occasion, much slower than she usually did, but still she did so with certainty; aye, even to the steaming jug of hot water that was destined for the toddy, and which actually fizzed, as if it were still on the fire.

And perhaps it was well that she did so; for it, seemingly, when nothing else would, at last, to the great relief of Tom Throstle and myself, brought the divine to his *Amen*, and then, oh! what a clinking of glasses, and clatter of toddy ladles, took place—the reverend Nahum being the first to have his tumbler filled, from which he took a hearty swig, and pronounced the same to be excellent!

Nahum, then, did not let time pass idly away; for, before Tom and I were half done, with our first tumbler of whisky-toddy—and we were pretty good hands at discussing that description of liquor—he had his drained off, and the bottle again seized, with the view of replenishing his tumbler.

Nor did the respected licentiate, while thus administering to his own *spirituous* comforts, neglect us, his entertainers, in regard to our *spiritual* interests. For all the time—notwithstanding the double duty his gullet had to perform, as a conveyance for his words upwards, and his drink downwards, a process that caused his hand, grasping his tumbler, to rise and fall betwixt the table and his mouth, in successive and regular oscillations, like those of a steam-engine—he continued to address us, in words of wisdom and goodly advice, and that, too, with a volubility, which did not allow us to put in a word edgeways, even had we been so disposed.

"Ah! my dear young friends," he went on to say, "ye are twa inexperienced lads, not up to the ways of the world, and simple like sheep—I might say lambs, considering your

gentleness and tender years—to gang astray (sip, sip, at the toddy). Oh! tak' advice from one that has nothing but your good at heart, and be mindful to walk in the straight path which leadeth not to temptation (sip) but guideth to blissfulness (sip). Oh! be sure, dear youths, to read your Bible, and neglect not your 'carritch'—as my dear mither, plain honest woman that she is, expresses it—meaning thereby the longer and shorter catechism, in which is laid down the whole duty of man, as well as the Confession of Faith (sip, sip). Be most attentive to your devotions, night and morning, and keep free from vice of every description. Above everything, keep free from the vice of drunkenness (sip, sip, sip); for drunkenness (sip) is the root of all evil, and when the drink is in, the brains are out, thereby leading to destruction (sip). Oh! then, my dear brethren, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Keep him at arm's length!—aye at stick length!—and if ye carry a crutch, even at the length o' that! (sip). My dear young friend, Throstle, I address you in particular, for I am now about to propose a toast. But first hand me the bosky whittle—that is, the whisky bottle. I declare I am speaking thick, but that's on account of my great interest in your welfare. Ha'e ye ony sneeshin' in the house; a pinch will revive me? Aye, as I was saying (thank you for the box) I have a toast to propose—but first rax me the sugar



and the hot water—(thank you) and that is the health of our worthy young friend who is about to proceed on a foreign voyage, and almost to another world (ugh! a-hoo!—ugh! a-hoo! I declare the snuff's strong), as I may say. Oh! may he be a missionary to the heathen; may he enlighten the darkness of these superstitious places (sip, sip); may he be an example and an adviser to the inhabi-

tants—above all, may he be successful in his adventure; may he be fortunate—that is mak' a fortune, and return to us in

the midst of wealth and independence, under which circumstances he will be welcome to us, and for whom, though not a prodigal, we will kill the fatted calf, and receive him into our arms again!"

The worthy Nahum, here, at last made a pause, not from any exhaustion of the subject—for on that, or indeed any other, he could have gone on to doomsday—but because he wished to do justice to the toast, with a larger swig than he had been indulging in, and which enabled him to finish his second tumbler, which he did, clean off-hand, holding the glass, mouth downwards, to show that he had duly honoured the toast.

This *hiatus*—as it may be called—Tom took advantage of; for, springing to his feet, he called for three-times-three, in which our reverend guest so willingly joined, with a double-shotted hip, hip, hurrah! "that roof and rafter a' did dirl."

Nor did Tom stop there; for, after I had modestly replied to the toast, he proposed, in a speech which, no doubt, he considered very eloquent and to the point, that of Nahum himself, and subsequently that of his excellent mother, finishing off with a request that



Mr. Gusset would show his further talents, in music, as he had done in eloquence, by favouring us with a song.

This the reverend gentleman protested against, as he said he never opened his mouth in tune, excepting that of psalmody, begging us, at the same time, to consider his profession, which called upon him to be very sober, in conduct. He added, however, that he approved of laymen indulging in that way if they felt so inclined.

Still, as he did not wish to mar our enjoyment (the toddy being so excellent, and he at his third tumbler), he would, if we would allow him, give us a few illustrations of pulpit eloquence, as practised by several divines of the Kirk

of Scotland, whom he considered as models to their reverend brethren.

Nahum here commenced, instead of what we had feared would have been, a dull and morose affair, what turned out to be a treat of the highest degree, being nothing less than a most amusing and ridiculous imitation, or rather mimicry, of almost every Presbyterian clergyman pertaining to the locality, in which not only their nasal twangs, their sing-song drawlings, their stutterings, their wailings, and their whinings, but their physical peculiarities, in the shape of twisted mouths, squinting eyes, and screwed noses, were so comically and humourously—and at the same time so gravely—demonstrated, that Tom and I roared with laughter.

This put Nahum in wondrous good humour, and though it did not bring even a grin to his own austere countenance—not that he was devoid of mirth, for I thought I could hear a chuckle far down in his throat—but that he had a wonderful command over his features—it disposed him for any amount of jollity, consistent with his own views of what was proper, in respect of which he brewed away at the toddy, till he was ahead of us in tumblers beyond numeration. In short, the three bottles of eleven over-proof, which had been laid in by Tom Throstle, were almost at low water level, and we, instead of Nahum, now speaking thick; for the reverend gentleman had seemingly sobered himself by his “illustrations of pulpit eloquence.”

It was only *seemingly* though, as the sequel will show, for all of a sudden he declared he was both hungry and athirst, notwithstanding the supper he had eaten and the oceans of toddy he had imbibed, and thereon rising from his chair he stalked to the cupboard, from whence he returned with Tom's Dutch cheese, which he commenced to slice down and devour—not so much as ridding it of its crust—with an avidity that was fearful to behold—particularly by those interested in the cheese,—while washing the same down with the remaining bottle of ale of the half-dozen that had originally been laid in.

This done, the reverend Nahum fortified all, by emptying the remaining bottoms of whisky into a large glass, and tossing the same off, while declaring that “good works are always accompanied by the spirit!”

Nahum then arose, seemingly satisfied with the clearance he had made, to take his departure for the night, or rather morning, for it was now a few short hours "ayont the twal'"; but before doing this, he whistled a jig—whistling being, in his opinion, allowable (excepting on Sundays), though not singing—and then, as if a sudden fancy had come over him, he danced "*cur-cuddoch*"* till the floor below us oscillated and shook.



"Lastly, and to conclude," as he possibly would have said, in preaching one of his own sermons, he gave us a prayer, the object thereof being to implore a blessing on me in the voyage I was about to take, but which might have passed as a continuation of the pulpit eloquence he had favoured us with in the other portion of the evening.

This done, the worthy gentleman slipped off to his own crib, leaving Tom and me to follow his example.

* NOTE E.—*Cur-cuddoch*. See Appendix.

CHAPTER XXIX.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Farewell, old Clyde!—'midst storm and spray,
Thy bosom bears me to the Main;—
Full many a year shall pass away,
Ere I behold thy shores again.

My course lies to a foreign clime,
My prow points to a distant land;
Another round of silent time,
And I no more shall hail thy strand.

Alas!—fair Clutha, we must part;
But while thy lingering hills I see,
With brimming eyes, and aching heart,
I sigh adieu, to them and thee!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

THE next forenoon saw me on board the steamer, accompanied by Tom Throstle, bound for Greenock, from whence I was to embark for the coast of South America.

I had taken a kindly farewell with Mrs. Gusset, but had not had the like pleasure with her son Nahum—the reverend gentleman, for reasons best known to himself, having failed to make his appearance that morning, at his usual early hour; and delicacy having forbidden, on my part, any particular allusion to him, or the past evening, or rather morning, I was only enabled to leave him my compliments and friendly regards.

As the steamer, after collecting her passengers on board, threw off her mooring ropes, and commenced to patter down the river, I could not but feel something like melancholy

feelings steal over me. I was now leaving a locality in which, young as I was, I had witnessed most eventful scenes, that could not fail to attach themselves to my mind during my future career, in an oppressing and controlling shape, under whatever circumstances I might be placed. Therefore, it was no wonder, if I felt thoughtful and subdued.

The gray city, with its usual overcast atmosphere of smoke and vapour, was soon out of my sight; but still the very banks of the river had reminiscences for me. On these I had rambled midst sunshine and storm, while engaged with rude tackle in fishing for eels and flounders; or perhaps in bathing and swimming, the latter being an accomplishment for which Glasgow chaps are particularly famed, beyond those of any other locality within the realm, with the exception perhaps of Paisley.

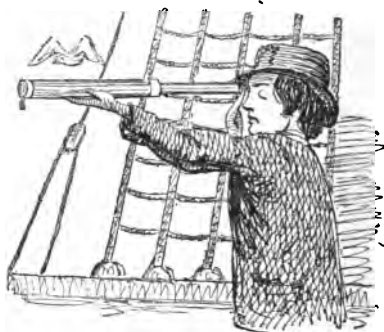
But even further down, the hills and dales—or rather as they might be denominated, the incipient Highland mountains and valleys of Clydesdale—claimed me as a departing acquaintance: for often, although not particularly mentioned in what has been written, I had wandered to these—something like a juvenile tramp—in search of novelty and excitement, not to mention eleemosynary contributions that are so dear to the little beggarly urchins of the Goosedubbs and Brig-gate, and which are so generously supplied by the farmers and cotters of that hospitable locality to such way-farers, in the shape of milk, slices of “kebbucks,” and “farles” of oatmeal cake, I believe with the spirit of real charity and benevolence.

Such circumstances could not fail to have endeared these scenes to me, and, therefore, it may not be wondered at, if long after I had parted with my only friend Tom Throstle, at Greenock, and the good ship in which I had embarked at that port, and in which I was now fast speeding to the ocean, had gained the *embouchure* that led to the Channel, I should have looked back in sorrow, sadness, and sentimentality, while feeling what has been expressed for me, so much better than I could have done it myself, by the respected bard of the Goosedubbs, as a preface to this chapter.

A steady, though stormy north-west breeze, led us safely down St. George's Channel, and thereby prepared me, and one or two other passengers, who went in the same ship, for

an introduction to the great Ocean, "with its blue above, and its blue beneath," and, in consequence, the usual preliminary state of sea sickness which generally attends landmen, particularly on their first voyages, was shortly got over, so that by the time we reached the warm latitudes, I might say I had become habituated to a sea life, and justified in considering myself a "bit of sailor."

My voyage, therefore, while not a speedy one—for at that time, vessels, unlike those of the present era, were built bluff and strong, so as to carry, without reference to fleetness—was pleasant and monotonous enough, relieved though it was, by a persevering use of the captain's spy-glass;



and, after all the usual vicissitudes pertaining to such—in the shape of calms, squalls, and favourable tacks of weather, varied by an occasional tornado, not to speak of sharks, dolphins, albatrosses, and flying-fish, making their appearance—had been got over, I reached my destination in the best of health and spirits, and was welcomed, on arrival, by the managing partner of Gunter, Slide, & Company's house, who duly installed me into office, and where I immediately commenced my duties.

It is not my intention to be very particular in mentioning the incidents connected with what now became my daily course of life, and for this simple reason, that really there were few worth recording.

I had come to this part of the globe—the name of which

it is not even necessary that I should divulge—for a specific purpose, namely, that of carrying out a mercantile engagement with men who had hired me for the job, as they would a post-horse at home, and who were prepared, when they had done with me, to *have done* with me, and to do better with others, in a fresh contract, if they could; while I, on the other hand, was likewise bent on looking a-head for myself, without reference to them, beyond “what was in the bond!”

Had I died, no doubt there might have been a strained sorrow expressed by the partner here, whose duty it would have been to have “advised” the circumstance to the house at home, in the shape of an usual business letter, duly copied into the letter-book, and sealed for the nonce with a black wafer instead of an ordinary red one, probably to this effect:—“Messrs. Gunter, Slide, & Company,—Dear Sirs,—Annexed we send you duplicate of our last, *ez.* Snuffler, dated so and so. And we have now the melancholy duty of intimating to you, the death of Mr. So-and-So, our Store Department Clerk, whom you sent out by the Rover last fall. He had been ailing for some time, as we duly reported in former advices, but was properly attended to by the medical adviser of the house, and likewise by Dr. So-and-So, called in specially (whose charge being special will be defrayed by funds left by the deceased), notwithstanding which, he never rallied, and died on such and such a day, and at such and such an hour. Please mention these circumstances to deceased’s friends, and that there are at his credit so many dollars, so many cents, after paying all charges, which may be disbursed to them, at the usual current rate of Exchange, which is low, in consequence of the unusually extensive shipments of hides and produce for Europe, but which promises soon to rise again, the market for such, and other produce being less animated, as you may observe by the enclosed price current, &c., &c., &c!”

It is possible, however, that such a letter might have been varied in such a way as this:—“As the deceased expressed an earnest desire that his remains should be sent home for sepulture in his native country, and has left sufficient funds to defray the expenses, we have had his corpse placed in a barrel of rum, marked ‘G., S., & Co.’ and have shipped the same, *per* the Lively Kitty, Captain Marlingspike—

which has nearly finished her loading, and will proceed to sea in a few days—for which we enclose to you bill of lading, and note of disbursements."



And thus I would have passed away from the foreign house of Gunter, Slide, & Company; while it is problematic, if even any of my brother clerks would have shed a single tear for my fate. If they did, it would have been rather touching for any one to have witnessed their lamentations over my *rum* coffin, duly marked, and prepared for shipment!

But still the place, and my position, had charms for me. They spread before me a broad field for ambition, and offered fair prospects for my making a fortune, when the proper time, that would enable me to trade on my own account, should arrive; for at that period South America was comparatively a neglected quarter of the commercial world, and only beginning to develop those extraordinary resources for traffic, which have since so greatly enriched those who have had the wisdom to take advantage of them.

My domestic mode of living, too, was pleasant enough. I resided in the house of the firm, in common with the managing partner and the other clerks, free of charge. Not only so, but I saw a good deal of pleasant society, the custom of the place being to extend to all strangers the hospitality of the establishment in a hearty and unostentatious manner. The very masters of the ships that came consigned to us, took up their abode with us, and were welcome to the run of the establishment, the same as if they had been in their own private mansion.

I had, therefore, plenty and great variety of society, although of a kind not particularly fitted to encourage a young man, ignorant of the world, in the cultivation of ethics and polite manners. We smoked enormously, drank profusely, and swore fearfully; and what with conversation

about business, talk about news from home, and long yarns from skippers, we got on comfortably and rudely enough.

In addition, there was a capital library belonging to the establishment, which had been collected by a former partner of rather a literary turn, who, on dying, had bequeathed its future use to the young men. In it I found a capital selection of histories, encyclopædias, and other instructive works, and these I made good use of in my leisure moments, and found the advantages thereof.

Thus year after year passed, while I formed the general acquaintanceship of the place, and came to know familiarly all the British residents around and beyond, and what was the value and extent of their several traffics, as well as their own value and standing, in a monetary point of view.

I saved the better portion of my salary, too, and with a few moderate, but lucky private speculations, laid up a sum, which I anticipated would form a little "nest egg" when I came to set up for myself—a contingency I had in view from the very first; aye, even before I left home!

Only one event of a special nature connected with my social and personal career occurred during all this time, and which I feel bound to narrate, it simply being this:—One morning the negro, or rather the "nigger" as we called him, who attended upon me, came to inform me, that a person wished to speak with me, who waited in the anti-room of the office, set apart for such purposes, and after I had completed my toilet, I descended to ascertain what could be the reason of so unusual a call.

On entering the apartment, an old man rose from the bench that lined the sides thereof, and moving not more than a couple of paces towards me, stood still, while gazing at me with his hand held across his eyebrows, so as to shade his eyes from the bright sunshine that was beaming through the open windows, while I likewise brought myself up to contemplate him.



His hair was silvery white, his brow bald, and his skin wrinkled, but otherwise he was a hale old fellow, in whose countenance I recognised expressions, that seemed to be not altogether strange to me.

It is perfectly possible that I would have taken a considerable time to guess who he was, had I not been assisted by certain appearances of demeanour and dress, which, while proclaiming him to be a sailor, told also that he was of my own country, and—however unwelcome to me the fact—that, at the same time, he was no other than my own father, as the reader by this time will likewise possibly have surmised. My own father!—he whom I had once loved so well, and parted with so kindly and affectionately so many years before—and unwelcome? Yes, such was the case!

Of course, as I have never concealed, this work is the confession of a selfish man, and I need, therefore, scarcely explain that it was because of that selfishness, fostering the ambition within me—or it may be the ambition fostering that selfishness—that I felt so unnaturally towards one who should have been so very differently treated.

Had my father been a gentleman—had he been in a respectable position, even though not affluent—had he been one whom, on attaining the point and position in society at home, that I was straining at, I could have placed at my side, while proudly proclaiming my relationship to him, it would have been perfectly different. But he was a “common man”—a vulgar man—a working sailor—one who had never spoken to a gentleman but as a dependant—one who, if taken out of his sphere, and placed in a better one, would have been like a fish out of the water—above all, one who formed a link betwixt myself and still lower and more vulgar persons! Therefore it was that I viewed him with antagonism—with no enmity certainly—but with dread: that is to say, dread that his relationship would contaminate and compromise me, when I attained, what my star, now in the ascendant, was in my opinion, fast guiding me to!

Need I plead that many, besides myself, have struggled in a like egoistical predicament to that which I was now encountering? In commercial communities, where men spring up to greatness—that is wealth—like tall saplings, they are always grieved to be claimed by the lower copse,

on which they now look down, and various are the ingenious methods they devise to get quit of the crawling vegetation which cumbers their roots. Do we not see these upstarts in the race of gentility, pensioning their outstripped relations every day, very filially, or very fraternally, no doubt, but at the same time very conveniently—or as conveniently as possible—for the sheer purpose of keeping them isolated from themselves? It is true, they take these relatives sometimes to their very hearths. Yes, Croesus has occasionally his plain old father, or his homespun old mother, or his coarse brother, or his rude sister, or it may be the whole unkempt family at dinner, if for nothing but that they may see the magnificence of his establishment: and he tolerates much in performing his duties, on such occasions. He is all smiles though sitting on thorns, lest John-Thomas the butler, or Buttons the boy, should sneer on beholding that the old lady does not eat her fish or pease with her fork; or because the old gentleman sends his plate away with his knife and fork thereon, illustrating the formation of St. Andrew's Cross; or because this one uses the point of his knife as a salt-spoon; or that one takes mustard to his mutton. Consequently he is right glad when the ordeal is over, and he has got them sent off again in a *cab*, instead of *his own carriage*, which would have been the vehicle even for his little daughter and son, had *they* been going to, or coming from a juvenile party in the next street, whatever would have been the inconvenience to Rumble the coachman, and the "hosses."



What a nice thing, for such distressed gentry, would it not be, if there were some institution for their relief, under such circumstances? There are lunatic asylums, where one's mad sister can have a parlour and a piano; and there are quiet private establishments, where one's idiotic brother can have all the comforts of a home, while under gentle restraint,

and the world in general, never a bit the wiser! What a luxury would not "an asylum for humble relations" be, on similar terms!

Some such ideas as these flashed through my own mind, as I stood surveying the *quasi* apparition of the old sailor, who had so unexpectedly crossed my vision, and who, although I was convinced of his identity, seemed to be somewhat uncertain of mine, if I might judge from the way in which he continued to gaze at me, from under the horny palm of his hand.

"Well!"—said I, breaking silence, while I stood fixed to the floor, some paces distant from him, but without moving a muscle of my countenance, or evincing the slightest emotion that might encourage his paternal feelings; for I had not taken a moment to resolve on the part I was about to perform. "Well! you have at last cast up, old fellow, though you have chosen an out-of-the-way place, and taken a pretty space of time, for the purpose!"

This, I considered, was put with much tact. It was a warning that he should be moderate in his expectations; and it implied a censure for *his* neglect.

A gleam of recognition, as I said this (for till then he evidently had doubts regarding me), passed across the old man's countenance; and, at the same time, an evident expression of mortification at my coldness, which seemed to stagger and upset what, more than possibly might have been his expectations and hopes, as to a very different description of reception. Still, if nature was being ignored by me, it had its full sway with him; for he brought his hand down, so as to cover his eyes, while his bosom heaved up and down, and he sobbed aloud; the tears at the same time streaming from betwixt his tarry fingers. And this paroxysm continued for the space of two minutes, while I stood stock still, like a statue, congratulating myself that I had taken the prudent precaution to shut and bar the door, so that none but ourselves could witness what was going on.

At last he gave utterance to speech, so far as his sobbings would allow him. "My son—my dear and long-estranged son," he convulsively cried—"do you not give welcome to your poor old father?—or is it because you are now so far above me, that——"

"Peace, old man!" I sharply—it may be called rudely—broke in upon his painful address, "there must be no dramatic scene here! You have come upon me long after I had concluded you were dead; or, if I may reverse the case, long after you might have concluded that I, and all others related to you, were dead—left to get on as we best might, notwithstanding your promises that you would soon be back to us; therefore, I say again, let there be no scene!"

"Ah!" he replied eagerly, "you say correctly so far, but it was from no fault or neglect of mine. The ship in which I sailed foundered, and I, of the whole crew, alone survived. Since then ——"

"I want no explanation of the circumstances," I said, interrupting him. "It's the old story over again, and it will not explain an absence of so many long years!"

"Hear me, my son!" he chokingly appealed, "and I will convince you ——"

"Call me not son!" I haughtily cried, "for the time is now too late for that! As I have already said, I want no explanation, and will allow none! One, question, however, I will ask you; and let your answer be brief, and to the point:—Have you come from home now?"

"From home!—God bless you!" answered the old tar, "I have not seen home since last I parted with you off Greenock. Indeed having found my way to this port, and learned, by the merest chance, that you resided here, I came to ask you regarding home, and of the dear ones I left there, and whom I hope yet to press to my heart—unless," and he added this with a sigh from the depth of his bosom—"they are also changed, and care not again to see poor old Jack!"

"Give up the idea of going home!" I said, "for I will prove that it is better you should do so. And if you will stay here, or rather where I will point out you should stay, you will be provided for much better, and more comfortable than ever you can be at home!"

This improvised idea, however, of giving the old man provision in "an asylum for humble relations," did not meet his approval, however it might have suited me, for he instantly rejoined, "Give up the idea of returning home? Never!—Why," he continued, "it has been the thought of

my soul, the pole-star of my hopes, the apple of my eye, the only thing that has bound me to earth, and kept life from oozing out of this shattered old hulk, while hauled down with disease, and wounds, and confined and starved amongst barbarians, for, although you will not permit me to explain, for your satisfaction, how I have been so long detained from home, I think I can do so to them, for theirs, and simply thus:—The vessel in which I, along with my only surviving messmate, obtained refuge from our own water-logged ship, was subsequently captured off the coast of Barbary by a piratical craft, the captain of which landed, and sold us and our rescuers into slavery in that country, to the interior of which we were conveyed, and where my messmate, as well as many of the other ship's crew died. Indeed, I expected to have died there also; and doubtless such would have been the case, but for the provisions consequent upon the conquest of Algiers, that were stipulated for, in the interests of humanity, and which only came lately to be extended to the distant portion of the empire where I was confined, and by means of which I got free. On getting to the coast again, however, I could only find a vessel bound for the Antarctic end of the globe; but at last I have found my way here, I hope now with a fair chance of getting home, and which I earnestly desire. No!" he went on to say, "I am bound for home—thank God, with still a shot in the locker—and if I cannot, when I get there, work for my poor old woman, and dear little Sissy, whom I yearn to see, and whose innocent prattle yet sounds in my ears, why, I will beg for them! There is yet enough of humanity in the world to bestow a copper on a worn out old salt, and it will not leave them and me to starve, after learning what we have come through?"

The old man, had he intended it, could not have hit on a subject that was more severe to my feelings, than what was conveyed in his concluding sentence. It was the very kernel of the nut. The climacteric of the drama. The summing up of the debate, that had been going on in the selfish core of my soul for years, and, therefore, I felt a determination—that no sense of prudence, or fear of consequences on my part could resist—to avert if not by lenient, certainly by severe measures, what I dreaded above every-

thing, namely, a chance even of any circumstance that might interfere with my future grandeur, being nurtured in the very spot where I aimed at bursting forth, in full bloom, as a merchant prince on some future day.

I, accordingly, made a revelation to the old sailor that I expected would have the effect of putting him off his project. I told him all about my mother's disgraceful connection, during his first absence, with the man that had been hanged along with Barney, while insinuating, at the same time, my own gratuitous ideas as to Sissy's real parentage, and how he had been deceived and imposed upon!

The old man, as I expected would be the case, was perfectly appalled with my communication. He staggered backwards, and dropping upon the bench which lined the wall, he bent himself nearly double, with the palms of his hands pressed to his forehead, and there remained, now seemingly unconscious to everything around him; whilst I, satisfied with my performance, so far as it had gone, coolly walked out of the apartment—locking the door behind me—thus leaving him to realise in his mind, and digest as he best could, the *facts* I had communicated!

I then entered my business room, and was soon absorbed with my usual duties, as coolly as though I had been treating with an ordinary trader regarding the price of goods, instead of with a parent, on what might bear direct, not only on the existence, but the future state, of the members of a whole family.

Of course, this is perhaps not a very pleasant portion of my narrative, but still it is necessary that I should indite it, praying, at the same time, the "gentle reader" to bear with me, while promising that it may yet be shown that "verily such things have their reward!"

After giving the old man about half an hour to compose



himself, I returned to him, and with some sort of relief found him sitting up, and not lying in an apoplectic fit as my fancy suggested might have even been the case, when he told me he was so discomposed and perplexed by what I had communicated to him, that he could not even speak to me on the subject we had been engaged in. He, therefore, proposed to return, in the meantime, to a ship which was loading in the bay, and in which he had engaged to act as a hand for the run home, but that, if possible, he would return and see me next day, at the same hour and place.

I accordingly let him go, after offering him refreshments which he refused, while I engaged my ideas in thought, as to how I might manage him, should he still remain a recusant on the morrow.

I, however, never got the chance of treating him in that way, for when the morrow came, I found, lying on my desk, a bedaubed note from him, sealed with something like pitch, and smelling grievously of tar, while it was written and composed in the usual illiterate style of a sailor.

It served its purpose, nevertheless; as it conveyed to me the information that the captain of his ship, having accomplished his loading, in order to keep his sailors together, had got his pilot on board, and was determined to sail with the morning's land-breeze. That he would, therefore, not see me again, but sent his blessing, with an assurance that he had told no one in the place, nor on board of the ship, regarding our relationship; therefore, I need fear no damage from him! That, notwithstanding what I had told him concerning his wife and Sissy, he still could not help going to see them again, and taking them to his bosom; and that he hoped a kind Providence would forgive them all their sins, and his own in particular, for being so long away from them, but which he could have accounted for to my satisfaction, had I allowed him to do so.

On receiving this note, I was rather taken aback. It checkmated my schemes, and I felt mortified in consequence. I indulged in a hope, however, that the vessel, as the weather was comparatively calm, might still not have got far away, and be boardable, by means of a boat.

I accordingly hurried down to the beach of the ocean, which lay a little beyond the bar of the harbour, and, on con-

sulting a black pilot, whom I met by chance, as to the whereabouts of the vessel, and the possibility of doing what I wished, he pointed to a speck on the horizon.

It was the loftiest sail of the ship that contained poor old Jack, fast vanishing over the curve of the globe, and, ere I left the spot, it had disappeared, and, with it, him—whom I had used so unnaturally and so scurvily—for ever!



CHAPTER XXX.

INTRODUCTORY DOGGERELS.

Oh, wealth!—we bend the knee to thee,
And worship at thy shrine;
To us, thou art no fleeting myth,
But ever art divine!

Thy favourites we love, and laud
With many a warm encomium;
And to be likewise of the squad,
We'd go to Pandemonium!

The Goosedubbs Poet.

To business!—To business!—That is now the modern cry, even as “To arms!—To arms!” used to be the ancient one, when Fortune was about to be fought for. Indeed, we might well adopt Horace's distich as the motto of our commercial escutcheon:—“*Quærenda pecunia primum, virtus post nummos!*” which is so well translated in the comedy:—“Let us make money—honestly if we can—but by all means let us make money!”

Yes!—in the making of money, I was now completely absorbed, and if for the benefit of others principally, who held my services by right of covenant, I had, at all events, this consolation, that I was daily learning business secrets, and gaining commercial experience, which I felt assured would one day reward my own self.

Such attainments, I had sense enough to see, formed the backbone of business success, and accounted for the circumstance of so many old, or, as they might be called, “aristocratic” houses, going to the wall, in consequence of the

ruinous competition they became subject to, by the establishment of new houses by their former *employés*, whose real practical knowledge made up for want of capital, on which alone the strength of the "old houses" depended, and who, thereby, like senile Samsons, came to be shorn of their locks, by the Delilahs whom they had fostered in their bosoms!

Accordingly, with my nose buried in the journal and ledger, which formed my Prayer-Book and Bible, in the torrid and unholy atmosphere of South America, I soon calmed my conscience, although occasionally feeling a twitch with regard to my conduct towards my poor old progenitor, who had so unexpectedly and mysteriously appeared to, and disappeared from me, while half hoping that he would never arrive at home in life, or if he did, that he would be more considerate there, in regard to me, than I had been here, in regard to him, and moderate his revenge—in other words, ignore me as I would ignore him—in reward for which, I yet might do something for him, and those towards whom he seemed determined to act so kindly and faithfully, notwithstanding what I had revealed respecting them.

"He and they," I said to myself, "shan't want money, should they ever come across my path, but still that money must secure me against any claim of relationship on his, and their parts;" and so I went on selfishly scheming, and castle-building.

It was in such mood, and with such speculations in my mind, that I passed a great number of years in the employment of Gunter, Slide, and Company, having renewed my engagement with them, from period to period, far beyond what I had at first intended, partly in consequence of very handsome augmentations of salary which I received from them, and partly from a hesitation I felt to return to my native city, before the "coast was clear," in the way I wished.

That period, however, did arrive, or at all events, I judged so, when, what with the savings of my salary, the few successful private speculations I had made on my own account, and a handsome gratuity I received from the firm, in virtue of a promise that such should be the case if I conducted myself to their satisfaction—and which, from the circumstance, it appears I did—I had amassed the

comfortable sum of two thousand three hundred and sixty-eight pounds.

The greater part of this amount lay in London, in the hands of a respectable firm named Pull & Hawl, to whom, as agents, I had been recommended, and whom I had intrusted with several small consignments of produce, which had all turned out successful.

I now made arrangements with a young man, whom I had been acquainted, and in close friendship with, during the better portion of my sojourn at this place, for the formation of a house, the business of which was to be conducted much in the same style as that of Gunter, Slide, & Company.

This young man I had every confidence in, for he liked the country, on account of its dryness and heat, he having found that these had cured a severe pectoral disease under which he laboured whilst in Europe; and he, therefore, was likely to stick to his post, and not get "home-sick," a complaint which often did great havoc with foreign houses, whose partners and chief clerks, labouring under such, would insist on returning to their mother country when they should not have done so, leaving their businesses to take care of themselves.

He was honest likewise, and not over ambitious, being an Englishman, who—unlike the generality of Scotsmen that are ever looking to future personal aggrandisement—was likely to remain contented under my guidance and orders, so long as he was fairly used.

Him I bargained with, to take the management of the new house out here, receiving two-fifths of the profits, while I was to receive three, in consideration of the superior connections and influences I had, or was supposed to have, at home; the orders I had in my power to transmit; and the capital I would invest, as well as the financial resources I would undertake to provide.

At the same time, it was covenanted that while he was to be engaged in no other business or avocation, I was to be unbound, and free to do as I liked, an arrangement which the simple Englishman passively assented to.

Having settled these preliminaries, I shipped to London, by way of "handselling" the new concern, a cargo of hides and other produce, consigning the same to Pull & Hawl,

to whom I wrote that I would visit them personally in good time; while requesting that, in the meantime, they would do the best they could for our interest, with what was consigned, not only as regarded sales, but as regarded the return shipments that were to be bought with the proceeds thereof, as "*per directions,*" &c., &c.

I then accepted a public entertainment from the European residents of the place, at which the managing partner of Gunter, Slide, & Company presided; and, after hearing my business character eulogised, and my private virtues belauded, to which—with hand pressed ardently to my heart, of course—I modestly replied, I took shipping, not directly for England, but by the seaboard for the Republican States, all the principal commercial ports of which I visited, while making the acquaintanceship of certain firms there, with a view to future transactions of a reciprocally beneficial nature.

This done—finding a ship convenient for the purpose, that had casually touched at one of these ports—I stretched across the Atlantic, calling at the Cape of Good Hope, Singapore, Madras, and so on to Calcutta, with like business arrangements, all of which I negociated much to my satisfaction.

I found this method of personally becoming acquainted with the places which I intended subsequently to send goods to, and the parties whom they were to be consigned to, an excellent one, although attended with no small amount of exertion, and even risk, but which my activity, youth, and good health, enabled me to contend valiantly with; for it made me understand the nature and habits of the natives of the several localities, who, of course, were to become the consumers of these goods, and thereby furnished me with great advantages over my rivals in the same line of business.



From Calcutta, I took the route homewards—that is for Britain—*via* Bombay, intending to be at that port but a short time, it being my purpose to go from thence, by the Red Sea, or overland passage, which had then but lately been made available, through the indomitable perseverance of Lieutenant Waghorn, but who, like other pioneers of great national undertakings, is now forgotten, while those, who perhaps sneered at his efforts, are enjoying the fruits of his zeal and courage.

At Bombay, however, I received what may be called, in pugilistic verbiage, “a stomacher.” On taking up a London “Price Current,” I found to my dismay, that in that city all South American produce, and particularly hides, which formed the greater portion of the cargo I had bought for shipment, previously to leaving, were quoted at ruinous prices, while the state of the money market was such, that no prospect was held out of an improvement.

This was a heavy blow, and great discouragement to me; for, on making a calculation, I found that if Pull & Hawl should sell—and it was more than likely they would do so, the vessel being due about that time, and the bills to be met, heavy—instead of becoming a gainer, I would be so great a loser that I might consider myself ruined! At the same time, I had the double mortification of learning, likewise, by accompanying advices, that the goods I had suggested to Pull & Hawl, as the best for forming a return shipment—to be bought with the proceeds of the hides—were at very low quotations, and, therefore, could not have failed, from circumstances connected with the demand for such in South America, which I was aware of, to have left a very handsome profit, if gone into, but which, of course, could not be the case, when a ruinous loss, instead of a profit, would more than likely result from the unfortunate hide speculation.

This threw me completely on my beam ends, and, in consequence, I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep, notwithstanding the hospitable attentions I received at the hands of a friend to whom I had a letter of introduction, and at whose establishment I staid.

My distress of mind was very great indeed, and aggravated by the fearful heat of the climate, I was thrown into a

fever, which confined me to my bed for a couple of weeks, during which time I suffered pains—mental pains—that, till then, I had been a stranger to. I was, in fact, in a monetary fever, the severest type of that description of disease which possibly can be suffered, and I believe I would have died under it, had I not placed confidence in a greater power than that of the doctor who was going about me—namely, in my good luck, which I could not bring myself to think would yet desert me.

Nor did it desert me; for, one day, having received a file of British commercial papers which had arrived by a supplemental mail, just in, and which had been kindly sent from the office by my friend for my especial amusement, I was struck on perusing them, with an account of the wreck, on the Goodwin Sands, of the very vessel on board of which my cargo had been shipped, and all of which had been lost—the very hides, as the article narrated, having been strewn along the English coast.



The paragraph went on to tell that the greater portion of the unfortunate crew had likewise been lost! but this did not affect me so much as did the fate of the hides, to insure which fully, I had written to Pull & Hawl about three weeks before the ship left, by a fast sailing packet, and again in duplicate, by another vessel.

Of course, if Pull & Hawl had received these letters in proper time, they could not have failed to insure the hides,

according to my instructions, to the fullest extent of their value; and, as I knew them to be most excellent men of business, and people who considered the simplest request of their constituents a law, I looked upon the hides as sold, though not in the way I had primarily anticipated, and well sold too!

There was a chance, to be sure, that these letters might not have arrived in time; but still it was only a chance, and though the circumstance made me anxious, I felt great relief in the news I had acquired, and which had such an effect on my health that I was enabled to get up, assume my clothes, and enter into a calculation as to the speed of the vessel which had been wrecked, as against that of those by which I had sent letters of advice, in regard to insurance.

Had this calculation been against me, of course I would have taken to my bed again, and there is no saying what then might have happened. The matter, however, was cut short, and that pleasantly; for, in the afternoon, my friend arrived from his office in town (his dwelling-house where I sojourned, being some miles distant, for the sake of coolness), bringing me a letter from Pull & Hawl, which had come by the same mail, but which from some mischance, had got amongst the other letters to the firm, and had thereby been overlooked in the morning, so that it was not sent along with the newspapers.

It had been written hurriedly, and at the very last moment, to save the mail—indeed the extra charge for being late had been paid—and was as brief as a doctor's prescription, though unlike the most of these, perfectly effective for the cure of my complaint. It was as follows:—
“Advices *per* So-and-So received, insurance effected, covering full invoice amount. Hides farther down; cotton looking up.”

“Alas!” I exclaimed to my friend, as I folded the letter and put it into my pocket with an air of perfect resignation, “I feel sorry for the poor crew that have been lost!” But, notwithstanding my sorrow, I made a remarkably good dinner, having had no “tiffin,” nor, indeed, had I partaken of much nourishment since I was first laid up. I never relished curry so much before, washed down as it was with iced champagne, and a bottle of cool claret afterwards,

as we lolled, in light linen dresses, in consequence of the great heat that prevailed, and to this day I therefore repeat the prescription, with grateful recollection of Bombay, as often as I have a chance.

The last three words of Pull & Hawl's despatch were not lost on my hospitable friend, who was a thoroughly mercantile man. "Cotton looking up," he said, "that agrees with *our* advices;—what would you say to a hundred bales of Surats?—quotations are extremely quiet here, freights low, and exchange on London highly favourable!"

"A hundred bales!" I returned. "My dear Sir, make it three hundred if you like, so as to help your commission, in return for your great kindness to me!"

My friend made a polite bow as I said this; but being a gentleman, at the same time that he was a mercantile man, he did not come the auctioneer over me—as many a keen fellow would undoubtedly have done, under like circumstances—and suggest six hundred bales instead of three, a circumstance which I often afterwards regretted exceedingly, I having been in the humour to accede to the proposition, had he made it; for these three hundred bales left each a profit of five pounds, which, in the aggregate amounted to fifteen hundred pounds, and had there been six hundred bales it would thereby have been double that.

However, my friend ordered another bottle of iced claret, and we spent a very happy afternoon, talking of business, and projecting many schemes and plans for my shipping large consignments of goods to Bombay, after my arrival in England, and his returning the proceeds thereof in the shape of cotton, and other descriptions of Indian produce, and which speculations we proposed to be guided in—so that there might be little comparative risk therewith—by a new system of acquiring advices, on the principle of expresses, which the overland route alone admitted of, and which few commercial houses were yet up to. We likewise talked over the lucky circumstances connected with my hide adventure, although I took care to be reticent in regard to certain particulars bearing thereon, which, if I had revealed, might have led my friend to suspect my prudence, if not my credit. Altogether, our colloquy was most satisfactory, winding up, as it did, one of the most exciting and eventful

days of my commercial life; this singular result having accrued therefrom, that next day I was perfectly well, my health recruited, and my strength restored, so that I was enabled, in the course of a week or so, to take my passage in the branch steamer for the Red Sea, and so homewards for England, *via* Egypt and the Mediterranean, to London, where I arrived in the best of health and spirits, after a remarkably rapid and pleasant passage.



APPENDIX TO VOL. I.

A.—THE GOOSDUBBS OF GLASGOW, p. 6.

"*The Goosedubbs*" of Glasgow, as that part of the City used to be denominated: the "*the*" being used in common with the same definitive article, as applied to "*the* Saltmarket," "*the* Briggate," "*the* Gallowgate," and so on, but which now is only recognised as "Goosedubbs Street," even as the others are recognised as "Saltmarket Street," "Briggate Street," and "Gallowgate Street"—although the word *street*, in addition to "*gate*" is a redundancy—used always to be estimated as one of the lowest, dirtiest and vilest of purlieus to be found anywhere. It was the Alsatia of Glasgow, and though by no means a *sanctuary*, in the proper acceptance of the term, was so in reality; for, when a ruffian once got within its bounds, he was to a certain extent safe,—the police of ancient days having been actually afraid to penetrate its interior, in case of being murdered by its barbarous and savage inhabitants.

Up to the beginning of this century, strangers visiting the City, used to be taken to get a peep into its mysterious and forbidding abyss, as a curiosity. And a peep of it, even from a distance, was enough; for, in addition to its forbidding features, the blast of fetid vapour that came from it—and which it is said country bairns, that were not very well, used to be brought to inhale, as "a change o' air,"—amounted to a warning of "thus far, and no farther," which did not require great enforcement.

The Goosedubbs, however, owing to the modern system of police and municipal improvements that are now in force throughout the country, are greatly improved and opened up, and though still a haunt of the lowest classes, may be visited without danger, particularly if the deep closes and passages pertaining to it, are not too freely intruded upon.

To give some idea, however, of what the Goosedubbs used to be in the olden time, nothing could be better than the following extract from the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* of Blackwood's Magazine, written by the

celebrated Professor John Wilson, who attended Glasgow University about the end of last, or beginning of the present century, and as a matter of curiosity, if not of study, more than probably took many a peep at the horrid locality:—

“Shepherd—The Guse-dubs o’ Glasgow. O, sirs! What a huddle o’ houses, and what a hubbub o’—

North—Gently, James, Gently—Your love of alliteration allures you occasionally across the confines of coarseness, and—

Shepherd—If you interrupt me, Mr. North, I’ll no scruple to interrupt you, in spite o’ a’ my respect for your age and endowments. But was ye ever in the Guse-dubs o’ Glasgow? Safe us a’! what clarty closses, narrowin awa’ and darkenin down—some stracht, and some serpentine—into green middens o’ baith liquid and solid matter, soomin’ wi’ dead cats and auld shoon, and rags o’ petticoats that had been worn till they fell aff and wad wear nae langer; and then ayont the midden, or say, rather surrounding the great central stagnant flood o’ fulzie, the wundows o’ a coort, for a coort they ca’t, some wi’ panes o’ glass and panes o’ paper, time about, some wi’ what had ance been a hat in this hole, and what had been a pair o’ breeks in that hole, and some without lozens a’thegither; and then siccan fierce faces o’ lads that had enlisted, and were keeping themselves drunk night and day on the bounty money, before ordered to join the regiment in the West Indies, and die o’ the yallow fever! And what fearsome faces o’ limmers, like she-demons, dragging them down into debauchery, and hauding them there, as in a vice, when they hae gotten them down,—and, wad ye believe’t, swearin and dammin ane anither’s een, and then lauchin, and tryin to look lo’esome, and jeerin and leerin like Jezabels.

Tickler—Hear! hear! hear!

Shepherd—Dive down anither close, and you hear a man murderin his wife, up-stairs in a garret. A’ at ance flees open the door at the stair-head, and the mutchless mawsey, a’ dreepin wi’ bluid, flings herself frae the tap step o’ the flicht to the causeway, and into the nearest change-house, roaring in rage and terror—twa emotions that are no canny when they chance to forgather—and ca’in for a constable to tak haud o’ her gudeman, who has threatened to ding out her brains wi’ a hammer, or cut her throat wi’ a razor.

North—What painting, Tickler! What a Salvator is our Shepherd!

Shepherd—Down anither close, and a battle o’ dowgs! A bull-dowg and a mastiff! The great big brown mastiff mouthin the bull-dowg by the verra hainches, as if to crunch his back, and the wee white bull-dowg never seemin to fash his thoom, but stickin by the regular set teeth o’ his underhung jaw to the throat o’ the mastiff, close to the jugular, and no to be drawn aff the grip by twa strong baker-boys pu’in at the tail o’ the tane, and twa strong butcher boys pu’in at the tail o’ the tither—for the mastiff’s maister begins to fear that the veeper at his throat will kill him outright, and offers to pay a’ betts and confess his dowg has lost the battle. But the crood wush

to see the fecht out—and harl the dowgs that are noo worryin ithir without ony growlin—baith silent, except a sort o' snortin through the nostrils, and a kind o' guller in their gullets—I say, the crood harl them out o' the midden, ontill the stanes again—and 'Weel dune, Cæsar.'—'Better dune, Veeper.'—'A mutchkin to a gill on whitey.'—'The muckle ane canna fecht.'—'See how the wee bick is worrying him now, by a new spat on the thrapple.'—'He wud rin awa gin she wad let him loose.' 'She's just like her mither that belonged to the caravan o' wild beasts.'—'Oh man, Davie, but I wud like to get a breed out o' her, by the watch dowg at Bell-meadow bleachfield, that killed, ye ken, the Kilmarnock carrier's Help in twuntty minutes, at Kingswell.'"

B.—SWINE IN ATTICS, p. 13.

It is a fact, that not long ago, both in Edinburgh and Glasgow, such discoveries were made, as that of swine being reared in the garrets of houses eight and—particularly in regard to the former City—ten storeys high. It was found that in some instances swine, which had been taken there, when they were young pigs, and, of course, easily transportable, had become so big, unwieldy, and heavy, that they had to be slaughtered in these elevated situations, so as to be removable piecemeal. Since that period a more vigorous police system has led to such outrages against the sanitary weal of the inhabitants being abolished, although there is still much to be done in the same way.

C.—CAPITAL EXECUTIONS, p. 76.

The description of the execution of Barney Brogan and his companion, with its relative horrors, given in Chapters VII. and VIII., may perhaps be considered too fanciful and overdrawn, for the purpose of exciting prejudice against, and throwing ridicule upon such a barbarious "institution" as that of the gallows; but the writer, while acknowledging that he is opposed to the continuance of such a savage and debasing mode of punishment, principally, however, in consequence of being convinced that it defeats its own purpose, namely, that of acting as a warning against, and thereby becoming a deterrent of crime, denies that there is anything described therein, beyond what repeatedly has taken place at such scenes, both in bygone and modern times, as the following facts, all duly authenticated, by references to the authorities from which they are taken, will perhaps prove.

In a Work called "Glasgow, Past and Present," published in two vols., by James M'Nab, in 1851; at page 54 of volume second, the following paragraph occurs:—

"On the 15th September, 1769, the Circuit Court at Glasgow was opened by Lords Auchinleck and Pitfour, when Andrew Marshall, late in Blacklock, parish of Slamannan, a soldier in the 38th Regiment, was tried for the murder and robbery of Allan Robert, of the before-mentioned parish, on the 31st of July, 1769, near the house of Drumpellar. The jury unanimously found him guilty of both crimes; and the court sentenced him to be fed on bread and water till the 25th of October, and on that day to be hanged, and his body hung in chains. It is stated in the *Glasgow Herald*, that until the execution of Andrew Marshall, the magistrates of Glasgow were never troubled with overseeing the execution of any criminal sentence whatever; that duty, when the convictions were before the Circuit Court, being imposed on the Sheriff of the county; Marshall's execution, therefore, was the first occasion of the magistrates of Glasgow having so disagreeable a charge forced upon them. Whether it arose from a feeling of humanity towards the criminal, or from inexperience in such matters on the part of the magistrates, it so happened that the arms of Andrew Marshall had not been sufficiently pinioned on the day of execution, in consequence of which he had the free use of them. When the procession (such as I have described) had arrived at the Howgate-head, the hangman proceeded as usual, to adjust the rope about the criminal's neck, and had drawn the cap over his face; and the carter, waiting for the signal, had already raised his whip to give the fatal lash to the horse, when Andrew Marshall made a sudden spring upwards, and seized the projecting beam of the gallows with the grasp of death. The hangman laid hold of his legs and endeavoured to pull him down; but it was in vain. After fruitless attempts to make him quit his hold, the hangman was obliged to procure a stick, with which he struck and belaboured the poor man's arms and hands until they became disabled and no longer capable of supporting him; when he dropped from the beam, and in this manner was executed. There is no wonder, therefore (as noticed in the *Glasgow Herald*), that the magistrates of Glasgow, after witnessing such an appalling exhibition, petitioned to be relieved in future from the irksome duty of overseeing the execution of criminal sentences. Agreeable to his sentence, the body of Andrew Marshall was hung in chains at the Howgate-head. This is the only instance on record of a criminal executed in Glasgow being hung in chains; but so offensive was the sight to the inhabitants of the north quarter, that putrefaction had scarcely commenced when the body was clandestinely removed."

The following is taken from the *Liverpool Albion* of 9th April, 1860:—

SCENES AT AN EXECUTION.—Mr. J. H. Carter, of Bradford, writing of the execution of Joseph Castles, on Saturday week, says:—"The

melancholy procession made its appearance a few minutes before twelve o'clock, and the culprit appeared to ascend the drop with a firm step, but his face expressed great agitation. He looked up and placed himself beneath the beam; the executioner proceeded to place the rope round his neck, draw the cap over his face, and tie his legs; a moment of breathless suspense ensued, and the bolt was withdrawn; but, to the astonishment of every one, the drop remained fixed. Calcraft immediately stamped upon the drop to put it off, but it still remained firm. He then went to another part and did the same, but with no more effect; a third time it was stamped upon, but still it did not fall. The executioner and officials seemed greatly agitated, but what must have been the feelings of the poor unfortunate being no tongue can describe. The spectators seemed horror-struck, and an angry murmur began to be distinctly heard from all parts of the vast concourse. At this juncture Calcraft approached the prisoner and spoke to him; he again left him, and at last, by the united exertions of the executioner and his officials, the drop fell, and the indescribable torture which the delay must have occasioned the poor culprit was brought to a close. The scenes which took place afterwards were quite in character with what is always the result of a public execution. As usual, the people made a holiday of it: men were rolling about the streets in all parts of the town; drunkenness, quarrelling, and fighting were the order of the day. One man was seriously injured and taken to the Infirmary; another lay in the street as if dead; some were taken to the lock-up; and others, more fortunate, escaped with black eyes and bloody noses. To crown all, a dancing booth was erected on the public market hill, and continued its performance up to half-past eight in the evening."

The following is taken from a number of the *Natal Mercury*, published in 1862, which proves that the horrors of capital executions extend even to the colonies:—

"At Natal two Kaffirs were to be executed. Early on the morning appointed, a large crowd of white and black spectators had gathered round the gallows, protected as it was by a military guard. The unhappy couple arrived perfectly indifferent to their fate, exhibiting the utmost *insouciance* and jocularly. On reaching the scaffold, the younger one began in a vivacious manner to evade, so far as he could, the designs of the executioner. The drop fell, when, to the horror of all around, the halter of the murderer snapt, and he fell heavily. The younger prisoner had managed to stride across the trap, and thus to avoid his doom. We shall not describe the efforts which were now made by the hangman and an assistant to force the prisoner down the trap, nor the struggles which the latter made in order to escape his fate. Suffice it that, after several minutes had elapsed, the work of strangulation was being accomplished. Nor shall we enter into the horrid details of other's fate. Enough to say that again the rope broke, and again the unfortunate creature, amidst the groans of the crowd, underwent the fearful process, and on the third occasion, the

attempt proved successful. It is a curious incident that the impression left on the minds of the onlooking natives, and of the prisoner himself, was that having committed three murders, he was to be hanged three times. So strong a sensation has this occurrence excited, that we hope there is little likelihood that such a tragedy will be enacted for the third time, and that in future the proper appliances will be provided."

In the *Glasgow Herald* of Friday, August 7th, 1863, the following is quoted from the *Manchester Guardian*:—

SHOCKING SCENE AT AN EXECUTION.—On Tuesday morning, Charles M'Cormack was executed at Longford, for the murder of a young man named Beglan, at Drinan Bridge. On the withdrawal of the bolt, the wretched man fell heavily, and, the rope being too long, he dropped upon his knees. Pinioned and half stunned, he strove to rise to his feet. The attention of the executioner was directed to the circumstance, and the manner in which he mended his blunder rendered the spectacle even more terrible. The wretched man was winced up clear of the steps over which he was hanging, and there he was left suspended in fearful convulsions for fully three minutes, when death put an end to his sufferings.

The following is taken from a number of the *Manchester Examiner*, published in January, 1865:—

EXECUTION OF THE SPEN MURDERER—HORRIBLE SCENE ON THE SCAFFOLD.—At eight o'clock on Thursday morning, Matthew Atkinson, a pitman, who was condemned to death at the Durham spring assizes, was executed in front of Durham jail for the murder of his wife, Ellen Atkinson, on the 17th December, 1864, at the Spen, a colliery village near Winlaton, in the county of Durham. Just before he was condemned to death he addressed the judge, Mr. Justice Mellor, and stated that he had had to bring his wife out of a house from another man on the morning of the murder. Upon this unsupported statement 11 of the jurymen sent a memorial to the judge recommending the convict to the merciful consideration of the Crown, on the ground that he appeared to have received considerable provocation; but, so far as we can learn, no reply to the memorial was received from the Home Office. On Tuesday, Atkinson took leave of three of his sisters, his nephews, and some intimate friends. The scene was a most affecting one, the whole party being quite overcome by emotion; and some time elapsed before the prisoner became sufficiently composed to speak to them. He had been most attentive to the spiritual ministrations of the chaplain since he was placed in the condemned cell, and seemed fully to realise the enormity of his crime. The time appointed for the execution was eight o'clock in the morning, and by six intending spectators came thronging into the city. The greater proportion of them were miners, many of

whom must have walked long distances, as was apparent by their travel stained appearance. Amongst the motley gathering were a considerable number of women, young girls, and boys, the females flaunting in the gaudy colours which characterise the holiday attire of the women of the mining population. A little after seven o'clock a large number of spectators had assembled within the semicircular inclosure in front of the jail; but the attendance fell short of what had been witnessed on former occasions of the kind. About half-past seven, Askern, the executioner, appeared upon the scaffold, and proceeded to attach the rope to the cross beam. He gave it sufficient length for a fall of four feet, but, as if not satisfied with that, he shortly afterwards returned, and increased the fall by about half a foot more. As the fatal hour approached, the gossip and jest which had prevailed amongst the crowd ceased, and when the first toll of the prison bell smote the ear, all eyes were turned to the window eagerly awaiting the appearance of the criminal. As the prison clock struck eight, the under-sheriff, Mr. W. Wooller, stepped upon the scaffold, closely followed by Atkinson, who looked perfectly cool and collected, but ashy pale. He walked forward and placed himself beneath the gallows. While engaged in brief devotion with the chaplain, his utterance seemed to be affected by an irrepressible convulsive twitching of the heavy lower jaw, but this was the only sign of emotion perceptible. Just before Askern put on the cap and drew the noose around his neck, Atkinson cast a rapid glance upward and round, as if taking a last look at this earthly scene. The bolt was drawn and the drop fell; but, dreadful to relate, as the rope tightened with the weight of the miserable culprit, it snapped like a piece of packthread, and he fell with a thundering crash into the interior of the scaffold. The dreadful event was rendered more horrible still by a hoarse and deafening cheer bursting from the throats of the spectators. The greatest excitement instantly prevailed. What was passing within the grim scaffold no one without could tell, and speculations were heard on all sides as to whether the fall had killed the wretched man, or, if not dead, whether the officials would proceed to re-enact the ghastly tragedy there and then. An age seemed to have elapsed, when, at the expiration of twenty minutes, Askern settled all doubt as to what would be done under these unusual and frightful circumstances by appearing on the scaffold with a piece of rope as thick again as that which had snapped. While attaching it to the beam he was saluted by a storm of groans and hisses, and loud cries of "O, you villain!" A minute or two afterwards, to the surprise of everyone, the murderer stepped unsupported upon the scaffold, his pallid features having assumed a purplish tinge, and his neck being circled by a dark red mark, showing what a terrible wrench the rope had given him. Askern put the noose around his neck, and put forth so much strength in drawing it tight as to draw down upon him another storm of hoots and groans. Owing to the thickness and rigidity of the rope, however, he failed to draw it close, and the consequence was that, when the drop fell, the unhappy criminal struggled frightfully for several seconds before the gallows did its horrible mission.

The *Northern Daily Express*, commenting on the same subject, says:—

The rope had broken near to Atkinson's neck, and it remained dangling from the beam in the air. People in the crowd fainted—women fell into men's arms; some rushed about yelling and screaming and tearing their hair. Many of the men were crying also; some were wild with fury; and for some time it seemed as if there were going to be a most serious disturbance. The police were on the alert. No one in the crowd knew what had been the fate of the unhappy man. Some expressed themselves in strong terms against the executioner. They said he had made the rope too long; the prisoner had to drop too far before the rope was tightened. Others said he should have tested the rope properly before. Some declared that they could not hang him after that, if he were still alive, for the hand of Providence had interfered and saved him. Some thought he would be dead; others thought not. Some thought his neck would have been disjointed by the awful jerk; others were of opinion that he would be killed by the fall, especially as he was helpless when he fell—pinioned and blindfolded, and with a rope round his neck. The excitement further increased as one of the bailiffs came forward on the scaffold and peered down the hole through which the poor man had fallen. The suspense was frightful. With reference to the distance he would fall it is difficult to say, seeing the reporters had no means of getting any more information than that which they could pick up from observation standing in front of the jail and within the barricade. We would suppose that the scaffold itself is about twenty feet in height. Inside there is, we believe, a platform about seven or eight feet from the upper surface of the scaffold. The bolt on which he stood would be about three feet in height; so that he would, according to this, fall a distance of about ten or eleven feet. In about a quarter of an hour, the executioner again appeared on the scaffold, took down the old rope, and fastened up another in its place of nearly double its thickness. It was a great strong rope, and was so very long, that he found it necessary to put it round the beam an unnecessary number of times. When Askeru was on the scaffold, he was hissed by the crowd, who shouted "Villain," "Shame," "Murder," "You're a villain." He was greatly excited at this time. His hands were observed to shake very much as he was fastening up the rope. At twenty-five minutes past eight, the same procession again came upon the platform. Atkinson walked firm as before, even more so, if possible. He was pinioned as formerly. He looked round upon the crowd. He stared most wildly. He stepped on the drop, the white cap was again put over his head, and the thick noose round his neck. The crowd hissed and groaned. Women fainted, and men rushed about crying wildly. Women shed tears and screamed. Farewell was again said to the unhappy man, the bolt was drawn, and he dropped down. He swung round. He was seen to be in tremendous agony. A fierce struggle was going on. His chest was heaving dreadfully. He died in about five minutes. His head and shoulders were seen above the scaffold. No screen was

drawn round it. He was not allowed to drop so far the second time. We should have stated that when the executioner put the rope round his neck the second time, the crowd cried that he was choking the man. And we did see him pulling it very tight with his hands before the bolt was drawn. The body was allowed to hang until half-past nine, when it was cut down and conveyed by the warders into the prison.

The horror, consternation, and disgust with which the breaking of the rope was received by the assembled crowd in front of the scaffold was fully testified in the shout which accompanied the disappearance of the unhappy culprit. The effect upon the officials in the grand jury room, consisting of the under-sheriff, his two bailiffs, and the deputy-governor of the prison and chief warden, caused an equal amount of horror as that felt by the multitude. The first attention was directed to the position of the unhappy man. Midway between the scaffold, a platform is constructed, upon which the drop, when it falls, rests. Upon this Atkinson was found, in a semi-unconscious state, in the attitude of prayer. In order to restore him, it was found necessary to take him into the air and give him some brandy. From this place, after coming round, he was able to walk into an apartment near one of the courts. It is almost impossible for mere words to portray the state of affairs in the vicinity of the scaffold from which Atkinson had so suddenly been precipitated at this period. During the dreadful interval which preceded his being launched into eternity, and whilst waiting for the necessary preparations being made to consummate the closing scene of his life, the mental anxiety which the poor fellow it may be imagined, endured, was alleviated by the spiritual consolations of the rev. chaplain. For upwards of 20 minutes, alone the doomed man and minister engaged in prayer most earnest and most impressive, in which he appeared to join with much fervency.

The general feeling in the city is that a most searching inquiry should be instituted into the cause of the rope breaking so inopportunistly, and exposing to the public gaze the spectacle of seeing a man undergo twice the horror of execution. For some years the ropes used at these disgusting exhibitions have been supplied by experienced rope makers in the town, of material sufficiently strong as to prevent an accident such as that which occurred on Thursday. On this occasion, it is stated that it was made of ordinary hemp within the prison by prisoners, for the purpose of saving an expenditure in the county funds. That the material was of an ordinary character was sufficiently apparent from the appearance of the rope at the place where it was broken, combined with the fact currently reported and generally believed, that on Wednesday afternoon, on the arrival of the hangman, the rope was tested, and a pressure of 38 stones placed upon it. It is due to the public that this should be made known, and also that at the last execution when the rope was made by a private individual the test put upon it was 60 stones without any perceptible effect. Even the rope which was substituted for the one broken had two of its strands snapped when the culprit was launched into eternity.

After reading the foregoing accounts of the many horrifying scenes that have taken place at executions—and which are well known throughout the length and breadth of the land: for nothing is read with so much avidity as such paragraphs—it may surprise no one that great hesitation should be evinced on the part of juries to convict even murderers of the most infamous description, unless the evidence be so clear that there is no other resource left. Nor may it be wondered at, if after conviction has taken place, that the Home Secretary should shrink from authorising executions to be carried out, particularly if well got up representations are made to him, as in the cases of Dr. Smethurst, Jessy M'Lachlan, and Townley. Indeed, even in the case of that arch-murderer, Dr. Pritchard, it was feared that a commutation of punishment might have taken place.

From such circumstances as these, it is inferred that executions are not deterrent; for no one is so up to the calculating of chances as the murderer, who, when he sees so many in his favour, is rather encouraged towards his crime, thereby, than otherwise.

But it may be asked, if capital, that is “death” punishment, is to be abolished, what is to be substituted in its place, for the safety of the community?

The simple answer to that is:—CAPITAL PUNISHMENT SHOULD NOT BE ABOLISHED! It is only DEATH PUNISHMENT, *i.e.*, *Physical Death Punishment*—that should be abolished; and, in lieu, there should be ordained MORAL DEATH PUNISHMENT, which easily and securely might be provided for, by something like the following clause, in the bill, that for the purpose, would be passed:—

“*It is enacted* that on and after the passing of this Act, it shall be lawful that, on any person having been found guilty of the crime of high treason, murder, or rape, the said person so convicted shall be sentenced to death in the usual manner, but in lieu of being executed on a gibbet, the said convict shall be immediately put in secure confinement for life, in such place as Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department shall direct, and who alone shall be cognizant of the future existence of the said convict, under a number or cypher indicative of his former name. That from the period of said conviction, the convict, in the eye of the law, shall be considered dead, and in consequence, if a married male, his wife shall be considered a widow, and if a married female, her husband shall be considered a widower, in either case with all the privileges and freedom of widowhood or widowerhood, to the relict of the said convict, as if physical death with the said convict had taken place. That on

the death of said convict his body shall be buried within the precincts of the prison in which he has been confined, without any announcement of his death being communicated to any one excepting Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, under the number or cypher indicative of the said convict's former name; and that should any governor, warder, turnkey, or other official connected with any prison in which said convict has been confined, communicate any thing regarding the said convict that took place during his or her confinement, or as to his or her death, excepting to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, it shall be considered felony, and the person so offending shall be liable to punishment for such."

It requires little stretch of the imagination to anticipate what would take place were such a law as the foregoing enacted. Juries then would not hesitate a moment to convict, even as in robbery and housebreaking cases. Secretaries of State would be impervious to petitions for pardon—indeed no such petitions would be presented—and Smethursts, M'Lachlans, Townleys, and Pritchards would in consequence, be at a discount.

D.—CANDLEMAS OFFERINGS, p. 105.

Candlemas offerings, by the pupils attending a school, are a remnant of the old Catholic times, when the priests acted as parish schoolmasters. Such offerings are now almost obsolete, although they were maintained in all their glory, up to a period long after the beginning of the present century, and will be remembered by many who yet consider themselves young people.

A Candlemas offering was a gratuitous gift from a pupil to his or her schoolmaster, presented on the second day of February, which is Candlemas day, and generally consisted of money, although in country places, many other commodities were often substituted, such as fowls, eggs, cheese, or other farm produce, but which were all welcome to the schoolmaster, whose means were greatly subsidised thereby.

The boy and girl who contributed most on these occasions were always chosen respectively king and queen of the day, and after being crowned, were carried or marched throughout the locality, "the observed of all observers."

It very often happened that great contention took place amongst the pupils for these honours, and stories are yet told how this lord's son, or that laird's daughter ran home to get from their fathers an additional guinea so as to gain the day; the worthy "dominie," in the interim, impartially holding his declaration, as to who was sovereign, in abeyance.

After the presentation of the offerings, a feast was generally given in return by the dominie, of fruits, confectionaries, and pastries; but it is a fact, that strong drinks, as represented in the story, were in many instances introduced, with the bad effects that might have been expected to follow. The author himself remembers of being at a school in Glasgow, where on two successive Candlemas occasions, the punch-bowl was introduced, and many of the young scholars, in consequence, were taken home from the school, DRUNK!—a pretty sight for their parents!

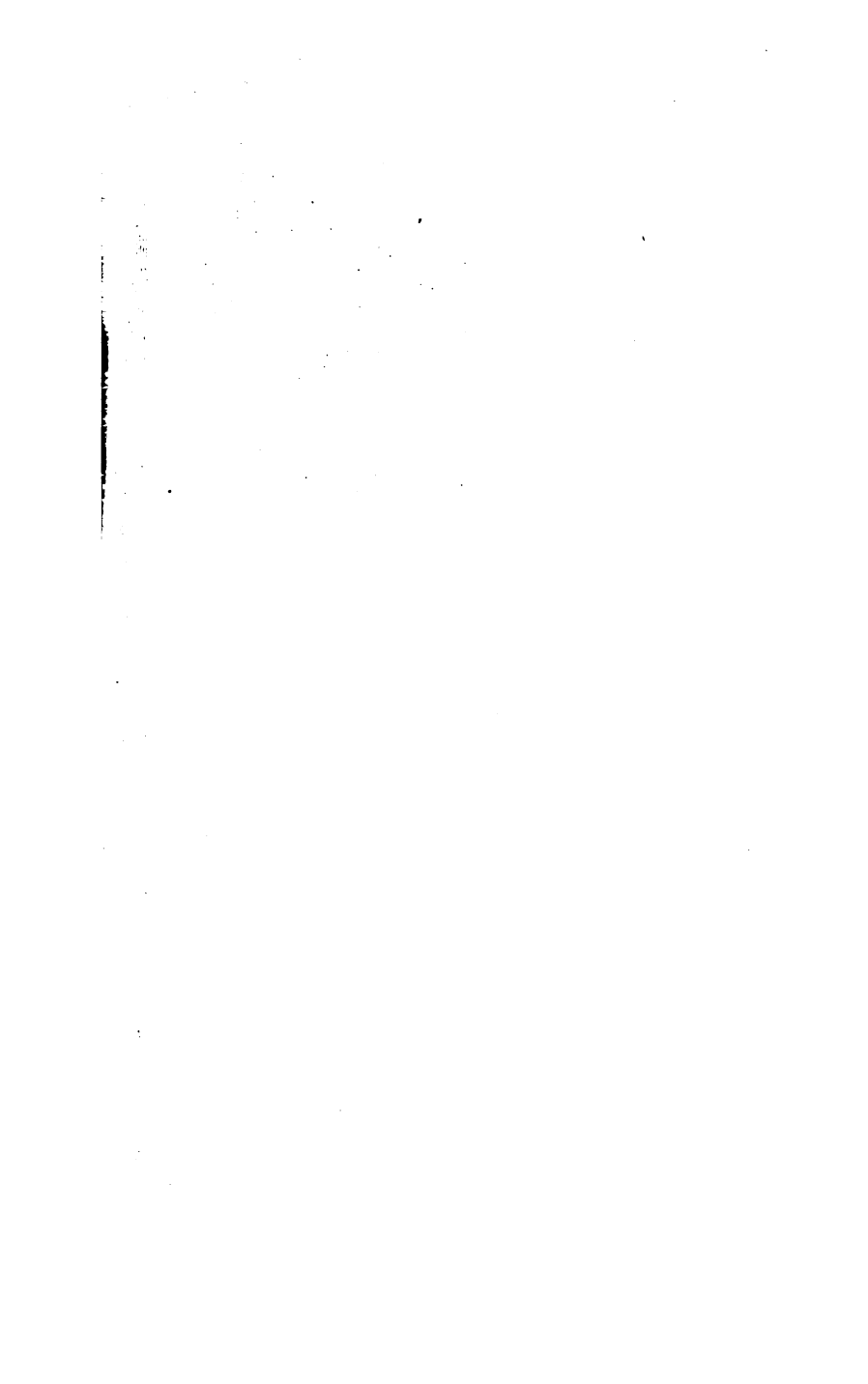
After the feast, different descriptions of amusement took place amongst the pupils, according to the whim or taste of the master, such as dancing, blind-man's-buff, or play-acting, and very often dog-fighting, or cock-fighting wound up the day.

So much for the march of intellect in the "good old times!"

E.—CUR-CUDDOCH, p. 265.

To dance Cur-cuddoch is rather an effort, trying to the lower limbs, and is only practised by those of a spare formation of body, and who are not "fashed with fat." It consists of dancing in a *lowered* attitude—the dancer, as it were, sitting on his houghs, and hopping around, while his legs are shot out and in, in a comical and sprawling manner, but which requires much muscular exertion.

Cur-cuddoch is seldom indulged in, excepting when the performer is tempted thereto, by great exuberance of spirits: possibly created by great indulgence *in spirits!*



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